MORAL NERVE.

FURNEAUX JORDAN.

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MORAL NERVE

AND

THE ERROR OF LITERARY VERDICTS.

BY

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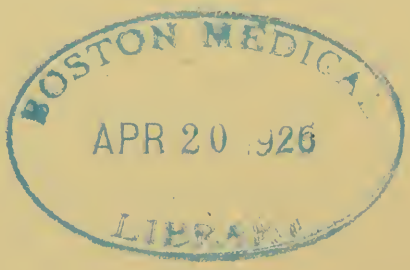

PREFACE.

In the early stages of civilisation men delighted in beads, polished buttons, and bright colours. Their descendants, when, in process of time, they became accomplished writers and speakers, continued to take delight in the gaudy, the marvellous, and the sudden. Even now the majority of writers, of purely literary training, dip their pens not only 'in dyes of earthquake and eclipse,' but in the more lurid colours of creations, destructions, supernaturalisms, 'immaterial entities,' and cataclysms generally.

The smaller number of thinkers recognise the basic fact in science that matter in its various forms, and with its varying energy and forces, is uncreateable, indestructible, eternal, limitless. They confess that of this so-called matter, 'the thing in itself,' nothing is known save that it and its properties are constantly changing with a change that never began—a change that will never end. Man himself was not created and time did not begin.

Long-continued familiarity with the ideas of instantaneous origins, rapid transmutations, and supernatural interventions on the one hand; and habitual contemplation of inconceivably minute beginnings, incalculably slow methods and perpetual change on the other hand, give rise to two outlooks and to two modes of interpreting the phenomena of life, man, and the universe.

And let me say here that the student of evolution and of its noblest product, 'nerve,' although compelled by reverence for truth, to relinquish supernatural heights and to dwell in the humbler domains of naturalism and law, has one great compensation—he values more deeply than others the creed left to him (and to others) by the development of nerve: that creed is, honestly to find out what is true; strenuously to do what is right; unceasingly to foster the finer feelings—above all the ethical, affectional, and poetical.

The less diffident—and perhaps the less wise—of the literary multitude are disposed to exclaim "a plague on your 'heredity' and on your bodily-organisation!" —vaguely imagining that if they laboured sedulously

enough, cared deeply enough, willed strongly enough, and if, above all, circumstance were sufficiently opportune it is in them to become Tennysons or Brownings. A few animated by the literary spirit and characterised also by lively fancy and uncritical judgment, actually imagine that they can see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and touch the intangible. Students of science, with more modesty and composure, recognise that nerve-organisation puts definite limits on every individual —limits, narrow in the idiot, not wide in the average man, and very wide in the genius.

Justly to appraise the relative magnitude of truths is the beginning of wisdom. One massive truth is the uninterrupted decay of supernatural beliefs. Evil spirits, witches, miracles, and even 'immaterial entities' call for no disproof—they simply, one after another, cease to be credible.

It is not the aim of these pages either to prove this or to disprove that, but rather to throw some light on the effects, in life and literature, of two widely differing points of view. I venture to think however that, in passing from page to page, the

unreasonableness of the one view, and the reasonableness of the other, will become more and more manifest.

I have intentionally given disproportionate attention to the moral element in our nervous organisation. Moral nerve, as I venture to call it, is unique in this respect—its action can be simulated seeing that other nerve endowments may, to a great extent, take its place. But, if there be no nerve of high capacity, or of poetry, or of eloquence, or of earnestness, within the skull, there can be no appearance of either capacity, or poetry, or eloquence, or earnestness in the character. These qualities cannot be simulated; and, what is more, if they are not within the skull by inheritance, no pressure of circumstance can put them there. Of what stuff moral nerve is made, whether of matter or spirit or deity (as pantheism teaches),—does not affect the arguments herein put forward. The foremost living biologist, who is popularly looked upon as 'materialism' incarnate, is in reality a pronounced pantheist.

It is not proposed that all men of letters who

pronounce judgment on the higher matters of life—*and all these higher matters are rooted in nerve-physiology*—should undergo training in a physiological laboratory—altogether admirable as that would be. It must often suffice that they frankly and fully accept the adequacy of a physiological basis. Every man who builds a tower or constructs a balloon is not called upon to prove the truth of the theory of gravitation for himself.

In drawing up the Table of Contents I have endeavoured to give to it not only fulness, but something of the nature of an epitome.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

Chapter I.—Mind and Matter: some Guiding Truths.

PAGE

Intellect, morality, and feeling in relation to nerve - - - 1

The words 'mind' and 'matter': how used - - - - - 2

Throughout animal life intelligence proportionate to nerve-organisation - - - - - - - - - - 2

Basic truths of the Universe made no loftier by lofty words and no meaner by mean words - - - - - - - 3

Opinion on matter, spirit, or deity, does not affect character - 4

Quantity and quality of character depend on quantity and quality of nerve - - - - - - - - - 4

No light, or sound, or odour, or taste, etc., outside the skull: these depend on contact of certain outside forces with certain inner nerve structures - - - - - - - 5

All manifestations of intelligent life throughout the animal world depend on amounts, sorts, and states of nerve - - 6

Every change in intelligent life preceded by nerve change - 7

Presence or absence of poetry and pathos, for example, in an individual depend on presence or absence of nerve-matter of poetry or pathos - - - - - - - - - 8

Brain stands alone and aloof: brain is the man - - - 9

Embedded in brain-matter are endowments, temperaments, morals, and much else - - - - - - - - 9

Brain hears, sees, feels, speaks, reasons, remembers, imagines - 10

PAGE

Difference in brain causes difference in persons and peoples - 10

A man's brain makes a man : a dog's brain makes a dog : their bodies are subordinate - - - - - - - - 10

To Mill and Buckle (and many others) brain unimportant - 11

As are the structure, and weight, and composition of brain, so are its capabilities - - - - - - - - - 12

If the human brain were ten ounces heavier its outlook, and insight, and judgment would be quite different - - - 13

Consciousness is the chief characteristic of brain - - - 14

Mind is merely the action or function of brain, as contractility is the action or function of muscle - - - - - 14

Brain, with its special senses, is in contact with the whole universe by means of air and ether - - - - - 15

Brain and mind : illustration - - - - - - - 17

Summary - - - - - - - - - - 17, 18, 19

Chapter II.—Moral Nerve : some Guiding Truths.

Standpoint not speculative, or metaphysical, or psychological—as psychology is ordinarily conceived - - - - - 20

Moral knowledge the clearest of all 'knowledges' - - - 21

In men, and in animals, the impulse to act rightly is stronger than the faculty to think clearly - - - - - 21

Morality a feature of all life : began with life - - - 21

Morality in any living thing is a deference to the well being of that living thing's fellows - - - - - - - - 22

Morality in men, and animals, is mostly unattended by introspection or self-consciousness - - - - - - 22

PAGE

A bed-rock morality for all living things: in addition each community of animals has its own special code - - 23

The greater morality of animals is because they treat immorality very severely - - - - - - - - 23

Why men and brutes are first of all moral: they possess moral nerve or moral organisation - - - - - - 24

Morality is the action or function of moral nerve - - - 24

Moral nerve first came into existence because essential to animal life. If no morality, no life - - - - - 25

Progress depends on improvement in quantity and quality of moral nerve - - - - - - - - - - 26

Many varieties of nerve: gentle nerve, fierce nerve, submissive nerve, turbulent nerve, voluble nerve, taciturn nerve, active nerve, pensive nerve, cowardly nerve, brave nerve, etc. 26

Moral nerve probably special and localised - - - - 27

Investigation is constantly adding to our knowledge of nerve localisation and specialisation - - - - - - 27

Variation in quantity and quality of moral nerve - - - 28

Moral nerve more plastic than intellectual nerve: more easily changed - - - - - - - - - - - 29

Injuries sometimes affect moral nerve mainly, sometimes intellectual mainly - - - - - - - - - 29

Localisation of the endowments - - - - - - 30

Strength and sort of an endowment depend on amount and kind of corresponding nerve - - - - - - - 30

Is there a religious endowment? - - - - - - 31

Religion is a propensity involving the action of many endowments - - - - - - - - - - 31, 32

Summary - - - - - - - - - - - 33

PAGE

CHAPTER III.—HERBERT SPENCER AS A MORALIST.

Mr. Spencer the first to fully conceive and expound the evolution theory - - - - - - - - - - - 36

Considers that religion preceded morals - - - - - - 36

A moral interregnum - - - - - - - - - - 36

Prefers psychological to physiological interpretation - - 37

Is little restrained by physiological consideration - - - 38

Yet peoples and persons are socially, intellectually, and morally different because they are physiologically different - - 38

Mr. Spencer in basing morals on religion insufficiently weighs the import of his own frequent remark that men are influenced more by the opinion of their fellows, than by the fear of future punishment or the hope of future reward - 40

Religions very diverse : morals more uniform - - - - 40

Wherever human life (or intelligent life) is found, a bed-rock code of morals is found - - - - - - - - - 41

Spencer implies that if a religious basis fails to support morality a philosophic basis needed - - - - - - - - - 42

Living nerve gives off moral codes, religious creeds, philosophical systems and much else - - - - - - - 42

With a stronger religious dominance, a feebler morality : with feebler religion, a stronger morality - - - - - - 43

Herbert Spencer on War.

In denouncing supposed growth of militarism, Mr. Spencer forgets history - - - - - - - - - - - 43

All evolution is warfare - - - - - - - - - - 43

Professor Tylor on effects of war. Civilisation in great measure the work of the war chief - - - - - - - - - 44

No nation can be perfectly peaceful till all are peaceful - - 45

PAGE

CHAPTER IV.—HUXLEY AS A MORALIST.

Huxley a brilliant investigator, reasoner, and teacher - - 46

Spencer a completer grasp of evolution than Huxley - - 46

Romanes Address: some confusion, inconsistency, and inaccuracy - - - - - - - - - - - 46

Cosmic man ancient: inner or ethic man less ancient - - 47

Inconsistency: on one page the older man hostile to all others, in another page he is sociable and deferential - - - 47

Deference to others (morality) first a restraint, then a habit, and finally a happiness - - - - - - - - 48

Huxley's view that animals have no morality an error: in the ape an 'inner ethic' ape; in the tiger an 'inner ethic' tiger 48

His view that cosmic man and ethic man in conflict, an error - 49

In his illustration—a newly planted garden on a Sussex down —Huxley does not see that the garden itself is a product of evolution - - - - - - - - - - 50

The evil in evolution - - - - - - - - - 51

The compulsion to use pre-scientific language in speaking of science a misfortune - - - - - - - - - 51

When delivering Romanes Address, said morality was not a product of evolution: on publishing it said 'strictly speaking' it was - - - - - - - - - - 52

CHAPTER V.—SUBSTITUTIONAL MORALS: THE PRINCIPLE OF PUNISHMENT.

Literary persons ask: If crime is the result mainly of organisation, why punish it? - - - - - - - - - 53

PAGE

Literary view that crime is more the result of circumstance and environment than of organisation, forgets that punishment is a potent element of circumstance and environment - 53

If criminals the victims of organisation, so also are the punishers of criminals - - - - - - - - 54

The fall into 'sensual mire' if organisation view accepted—a baseless fear - - - - - - - - - - 54

Supernaturalism, naturalism and morals - - - - 55

The origin and growth of morality due to punishment. All evolution implies the reward of superiority and the punishment of inferiority - - - - - - - - - 56

Moral nerve of two sorts : one true and inherited, the other substitutional and acquired - - - - - - - 57

Difference between the two - - - - - - - - 57

Morality exists now solely because immorality has been punished in the past. Only by punishment will it be maintained - - - - - - - - - - 58

The principle of punishment—which inspires in the criminal the fear of the discomfort he specially dislikes - - - 58

In the matter of punishment much may be learnt from the study of the anarchist - - - - - - - - 59

The anarchist's one mania—thirst for notoriety - - - 60

The punishment should be humiliation mainly : making him look ridiculous - - - - - - - - - - 61

Demoralised nerve cannot be further demoralised - - - 61

To drive crime under the surface a great achievement - - 61

PART II.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.—LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC VERDICTS.

All things appertaining to human nature are based on human nerve-organisation - - - - - - - - - 65

Illustrations of the error of literary verdicts - - - - 65

All opinions fall directly or indirectly under two points of view —the literary and the scientific - - - - - - - 66

The literary spirit seeks, first of all, ease, peace of mind, contentment. The scientific spirit seeks truth first - - 66

The literary spirit, being ancient, appeals unduly to the emotions - - - - - - - - - - 67, 68

The literary spirit arose in ancient time when ease and peace were difficult to secure. In early ages, as now, fear the dominant feeling - - - - - - - - - 69

The scientific attitude is not merely scientific curiosity, or ingenuity, or industry - - - - - - - - 70

To certain brains the scientific impulse brings the greatest happiness as the ascetic impulse does to others - - - 70

Science 'cannot fight the fear of death.' The newer fear of falsehood - - - - - - - - - - - 72

If brain is clay so is the odour of the rose, the song of the nightingale, the splendour of the setting sun - - - 73

'Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers' equally true that wisdom comes and knowledge lingers - - - - - 73

What if choice only between the poetic world and the scientific world - - - - - - - - - - - - 74

Poetry not an art merely - - - - - - - - 75

Love and Faith without science often calamitous - - - 76

PAGE

CHAPTER III.—THE GENESIS OF MODERN KINDLINESS.

Partially civilised men more cruel than animals - - - 78

Supernatural beliefs and cruelty - - - - - - 79

Modern kindliness due to growth of scientific spirit - - 80

The arts do not contribute to kindliness - - - - - 80

CHAPTER IV.—STUART MILL.

Mill eager for truth and justice and kindliness - - - - 81

Brain of little importance: circumstance everything - - 82

Yet speaks of 'natural gifts' - - - - - - - 82

Ignorant of slow change of nerve matter - - - - - 83

Ignored physiology yet considered to be cold and mechanical - 83

Heredity and circumstance.

The student of evolution necessarily believes in heredity. Brain is inherited - - - - - - - - - 84

What the brain is, character is - - - - - - 84

Illustrations - - - - - - - - - - 85

Moral nerve plastic—more susceptible to change than intellectual nerve - - - - - - - - - - 86

Conduct and character - - - - - - - - - 86

Treatment of heredity in history and biography - - - 87

Half the population take after mothers, yet mothers ignored - 87

The 'Tudor spirit' and 'Tudor blood': Henry VII only genuine Tudor - - - - - - - - - - 88

Amusing incident in the biography of a recent archbishop - 89

PAGE

Chapter V.—Thomas Carlyle.

Judgments much influenced by the nervous organisation of the speaker or writer - - - - - - - - - - 90

Carlyle's verdicts those of the active, not of the pensive temperament - - - - - - - - - - - 91

A scold on a magnificent scale - - - - - - - 91

On heroes and hero-worship - - - - - - - - 91

Heroes are of two sorts: leaders of movements and creative geniuses - - - - - - - - - - - - 92

Luther a leader: Shakespeare a creator - - - - - - 93

Shakespeare's brain so massive that he naturally did what he did - - - - - - - - - - - - - 94

The Reformation.

Does modern civilisation date from the scene at Worms? - 95

Strictly speaking advancing civilisation led to the scene at Worms - - - - - - - - - - - - 95

The reformation produced Luther, not the reverse - - - 95

The reformation an onward step in civilisation; catholicism and protestantism are accidents - - - - - - - 96

Chapter VI.—The French Revolution.

Commonly believed that English puritan revolution and French revolution had much in common - - - - - - 98

The difference between the two - - - - - - - 99

The French revolution (as Goethe was inclined to believe) a disturbance not a development - - - - - - - 100

PAGE

Chapter VII.—Epoch-making Incidents and Persons.

Epochs merely the more conspicuous links of long chains - 101

The great movements of history would have taken place if the names associated with them had never lived - - - 101

Leaders opportunely and ably express the thought and feeling of their time. It is so with the founders of religion - - 102

The Puritans did not give us political liberty - - - - 103

Marathon did not save Europe from Persian rule, nor did the battle of Tours save it from the domination of Mahomet - 104

The Reformation and different sorts of national nerve - - 104

Chapter VIII.—The Slow Change in the Fundamental Characteristics of Peoples and Individuals.

Four stages in our religious history: placid paganism, placid catholicism, placid protestantism, placid agnosticism - - 107

Seeming changes in peoples explained by the fact that various minor sections come to the front—now one, now another - 108

Professor Dill on Juvenal's picture of the morals of a small section of the Roman people - - - - - 109, 110

Why the Roman Empire decayed: no Roman nerve left - - 111

Chapter IX.—Emerson on Napoleon.

No circumstance could have made Mill a fiery prophet, or Carlyle a calm reasoner, or have prevented Emerson from climbing into cloud-land - - - - - - - 112

PAGE

Attributes to Napoleon two wholly incompatible groups of nerve characteristics - - - - - - - - - 113

Napoleon had probably nerve trouble in early life - - - 114

Intellectual nerve in excess : moral nerve feeble - - - 114

Chapter X.—Goldwin Smith.

In his later years recognises the value of science - - - 116

Believes in brain weight - - - - - - - - - 116

If brain of George III heavier - - - - - - - 116

The Tudors despotic, yet fitted for the times - - - - 117

Charles II under certain circumstances might have destroyed English liberty : English liberty innate and indestructible - 117

British savagery limited. In Lord George Gordon riots nobody was hanged on a lamp-iron and no heads carried on pikes - 118

Evolution as affecting political and social matters - - - 119

Chapter XI.—Material Prosperity and Religion.

Catholics less prosperous in this world than Protestants - 120

Said that Catholics attend mainly to affairs of another world and Protestants mainly to the affairs of this - - - 120

True explanation : Catholic peoples one sort of nerve, and Protestant peoples another - - - - - - - 121

Motley on the line which, in the Netherlands, separated Catholics from Protestants - - - - - - - 121

The peoples foredoomed to decadence adopted catholicism : catholicism not cause of decadence - - - - - 122

English nerve, not puritanism, gave us liberty - - - 123

PAGE

Chapter XII.—Nerve Forces as Totalities.

Nerve force and blood-supply a fixed total - - - - - 125

If muscular force excessive less thought - - - - - - 126

Goethe's nerve-total not sufficient for a Goethe's and a Newton's combined works - - - - - - - - 126

Darwin's nerve-total not sufficient for a Darwin and a Dickens together - - - - - - - - - - - - - 127

Bacon's nerve-total not sufficient for a Bacon's and a Shakespeare's combined labours - - - - - - - - 127

Total of the intellectual force of one chapter in 'Middlemarch' would float an average novel - - - - - - - 127

The passion in the 'Scarlet Letter' would float a dozen ordinary love stories - - - - - - - - - - 127

When tractarianism was active in Oxford classical learning sank - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 128

Total of Puritan nerve : total of Anglican nerve - - - 128

The Reformation actively intellectual : morality suffered - 128

English nerve force religious only in time of Henry VIII, poetic and dramatic only in time of Elizabeth - - - 129

The Evolution of the Direct Man (Direct Brain).

PAGE

Average brain is not direct - - - - - - - - 133

Direct brain critical, enquiring, testing - - - - - - 133

Divides the things of reason from the things of feeling - - 134

Direct nerve becoming more direct - - - - - - - 134

Is life becoming more complex - - - - - - - - 134

To bustling nerve every age is bustling : to calm nerve every age is calm - - - - - - - - - - - 134

The instruments based on advancing science simplify life - 135

Earliest times simple ; modern time simple ; an epoch of complexity between the two - - - - - - - - - 135

Advancing knowledge promotes simplicity by giving light and order - - - - - - - - - - - - - 136

Hurry and tangle, time and hours of labour greater in mediæval times - - - - - - - - - - - - - 136

Complex era made more complex by fervent belief in supernaturalism - - - - - - - - - - - - 137

Ignorance and fear greatest complicators of life - - - 137

On the remote side of the culminating point of the complex era were Scotus, Aquinas, and Erigena : on the near side were More, Erasmus, and Colet - - - - - - - - 138

Early men had more in common with the schoolmen than the schoolman had with modern students of science - - - 138

Modern direct nerve sees more clearly the wants of the time : legislation for children and women - - - - - - 140

PART I.

MORAL NERVE:

SOME GUIDING TRUTHS.

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PART I.

Chapter I.

"MIND AND MATTER": SOME GUIDING TRUTHS.

My fundamental axiom of speculative philosophy is that Materialism and Spiritualism are opposite poles of the same absurdity—the absurdity of imagining that we know anything of either spirit or matter.—T. H. Huxley.

All manifestations of intellect and morals and feeling, however brought about, depend on amounts and sorts and states of nerve-matter: so does all character in persons and in peoples; so do all institutions, movements, laws, customs, creeds, codes. Any change in these is preceded by nerve change. In other words, all things appertaining to human nature are based on human organisation. How nerve-states are brought about, and how changed, might well occupy the attention of historians and philosophers; few signs of such attention are visible.

The following remarks will be of an untechnical character. They will not give, even in the briefest

form, any general view of the structures and actions of the nervous organisation. The physiological truths here noticed will be elementary and yet at the same time illustrative of general principles.

In these pages the word 'matter' will be frequently used, but it will be used as meaning natural stuff—to borrow a good old Saxon word—of which we have some knowledge and so distinguish it from spiritual and supernatural stuffs of which, it is here taken for granted, we know nothing whatever.

Mind, it may be added, will be regarded as nothing more than the function—that is the action of nerve-matter. This also is taken for granted, because these pages aim at some sort of exposition—not at defence or attack. Attack and defence may be found elsewhere in multitudinous amount. This much, however, may be said: throughout animal life the ascent of intelligence is co-equal with the ascent of nerve-organisation. To pause the moment we reach the nerve-organisation of man and say, this is inadequate to explain man's intelligence, is practically to make an astounding affirmation. The burden of proof lies with those who make the affirmation. Such proof is not forthcoming.

The phrases, the methods, the points of view, of metaphysicians, as well as those of supernaturalists and theologians, will be put aside. And why not? In speaking of the outer world we all have in mind the same something—the something which one calls matter and another calls spirit. If this inscrutable something is mean and sordid we make it no better by calling it spirit or diffused Deity: if it has any dignity or potency it is made no worse by being called matter. In actual life moreover—and this is all important—neither the idealist nor the pantheist is loftier in ideals, finer in character, or more deeply thrilled by poetic feeling than the materialist. The naturalist breathes as ample an ether and as divine an air as the supernaturalist. The loftiest flights of grey nerve and of spirit are alike confined to words: and in words, nerve, as easily as spirit, is able

> "To scale the heaven's highest height
> Or dive below the wells of death."

In the home, in recreation, in travel, in the business mart, and in the committee room, the Berkeleyian, the Büchnerian, the vorticist cannot be distinguished one from the other. In all the high-ways of life the crass materialist and the lofty idealist run quietly together in harness:

together they journey to all high attainable goals —ethic, philanthropic, poetic or other: together also they fail to reach the unattainable.

Although academic views do not affect the conclusions here put forward it will be taken for granted that in the mystery of matter there is something behind appearances; but something of which we have only a very limited and symbolic knowledge. Nowhere is this belief more lucidly expounded than in the writings of Mr. Huxley, although he fully recognises the fact that the final explanation of matter is beyond our reach.

The nature and scope of the universe indeed depend much more on the thing (nerve) which knows than on the things (not nerve) to be known. The quantity and quality of nerve within the skull of any living creature determine the quantity and quality of that creature's knowledge of all things outside the skull. The same world outside the skull is one thing to a mouse, another to a dog, another to a peasant, another to a philosopher—simply because different amounts and sorts of grey matter give different sorts and amounts of world-conceptions. As the nerve-matter of an individual changes, so, to that individual, the universe changes also. The immature nerve of a child, the mature nerve of an adult, the

degenerate nerve of senility, have different symbolic knowledges and therefore give difference of view and of conduct. Different nerve-masses give rise to different religions and moralities, different social and domestic polities. We may form some idea of the part which matter within the skull plays, and the part played by matter outside the skull, if we carefully consider one or two facts in nerve-organisation by way of illustration. Within the skull certain nerve-masses transform certain outside matter-forces into light: the universe is dark, the sun itself is black—it merely gives off force waves which are also dark until they touch nerve. If there were no nerve anywhere there would nowhere be any light. So with sound, so in fact with all matters which reach the entrances and avenues to central nerve. The cannon does not roar save where there is auditory nerve; the electric cloud is never otherwise than silent and dark—thunder and lightning exist only within the skull. The universe itself, so far as we know it, practically starts into existence only when an outer material and mysterious something comes into contact with material and mysterious central nerve—mysterious in man, mysterious in dog. It may be said then that, in effect, the brain or nerve of each living creature creates its own cosmos out

of the raw material of matter, force, and change, which lies around it. An ocean of matter and of material forces flows everywhere and beats on every object—nerve alone responds, shape, controls, creates.

All the manifestations of life—all thought and feeling and morality and conduct—are based on quantities, states, and changes of nerve-matter. In effect, impassioned nerve sang Burns's songs; energetic nerve preached Wesley's sermons; lofty nerve wrote Dante's poems; degraded nerve committed Borgia's crimes. No surroundings could have given to Robert Burns the unresting nerve of John Wesley, or to Wesley the impassioned nerve of Burns. The lives of the slow and reflective Charles Darwin and of the acute and active Charles Dickens could only have been exchanged by exchanging their brains. Idiocy and genius, lunacy and sanity, vice and virtue, have their respective brain-organizations and brain-states. The massive brains of Shakespeare, Burns, Scott, and Goethe made them what they were, and the imperfect brains, whether large or small, of idiots make them what they are.

As all the phenomena of intelligent life depend on nerve states so any change in the phenomena

is preceded by change in nerve states. Change in character, however slow, however rapid, however much for good, however much for evil, is based on precisely corresponding change, slow or rapid, good or evil, in nerve matter. Not the most delicate nor the most violent change occurs in thought, or feeling, or speech, or behaviour, which does not accurately represent proportionate nerve change. Speaking broadly, somewhere and somehow, temperaments also, and moods, and endowments, and propensities, and habits, lie in and come out of nerve. Always nerve states and changes are basic and precedent. A lad does not whistle to keep his spirits up: he whistles because somewhere in his nerve-cells his spirits are already up. When a girl suddenly gives way to dancing and laughter it is not to make herself cheerful; it is because an already cheerful state of nerve impels her to laugh and dance. It is true that some cause—a material cause, by the way, coming directly from matter, passing through a material medium, and acting directly on matter—led the lad to whistle and the girl to dance. However caused, whistling nerve, in effect, precedes whistling lips, and nerve dances before the legs dance. When a simple-minded, simple-nerved man longs, however suddenly, for

his character to be changed, his nerve has already undergone some accordant change. When a convert prays to be made good his nerve has already become in some degree good : he prays because he is good, he is not good because he prays. Early training—Christian, or Buddhist, or Mahometan, has led him to associate goodness with prayer.

How slightly in literature, serious or ephemeral, intelligent life is associated with nerve organisation is a matter of daily observation. Not long ago an evening newspaper asked its readers for such examples of pathos as had most impressed them. The examples differed widely, and some savoured rather of comedy than of pathos. Not once did either editor or any contributor dream that pathos, responsive pathos-nerve, lies within the skull. It is a common experience to find persons utterly devoid of poetic feeling, but one never hears the remark that it is because the nerve of poetry is wanting. The material of pathos and of poetry is present everywhere, but how few have the appropriate responsive nerve-matter. Bells ring in many chambers but in some there is no answer. One nerve-mass cannot look on "the happy autumn fields" without tears ; another group of nerve-cells cannot look at

the midsummer's sea without, as Emerson reminds us, thinking of the price of fish.

Brain stands alone, aloof: it is the higher matter at the summit of all other and lower matter. Brain or nerve is man: all else that is human is merely convenient appendage. The bones lift it up, the muscles obey its commands, and various organs combine to supply it with nourishment. It is so with dogs and men: for the sum of a man's life is superior to the sum of a dog's life only in so far as a man's brain is superior to a dog's. If a dog's brain, it may be added, needs no super-natural crutches neither does a man's. If Professor James's sea of veiled thought flows through human brain it drains through a monkey's also.

Brain cannot be compared to anything else. Is it not natural that the comparing matter, higher matter, should be unlike the thing, the lower matter which it compares? That the thing which knows should be unlike the things to be known. In some way or other the brain is a reservoir—but it is much more: it contains, as has been already remarked, character, endowments, temperaments, morals, propensities, talents, and much else. It is also, in some way or other, an engine—but much more: brain, not

mind, be it noted, sees, hears, reads, speaks, writes, it reasons, feels, acts, it remembers, compares, imagines. Brain alone contains this, produces that, manipulates here, responds there. Brain, not mind, be it noted, wrote Hamlet and Tam O'Shanter. As a responsive organ, both in men and animals, it replies to messages from without according to its weight and structure: dog-nerve gives one set of replies and human nerve another set. Seeing that no two people are alike in nerve-organisation; that, though less markedly, no two individual nerve-masses are exactly similar, so no two replies are ever alike. Nay more, as the same individual nerve is constantly undergoing some change, so at no two periods in the life of a brain are similar replies given.

One fact is clear: brain remains paramount although its propensities and occupations are in great degree affected by circumstances; its endowments change but little. Whatever its environments may be, a dog remains a dog even though it spends its life at a philosopher's elbow. A man remains more human than canine even if kept in a kennel and led by a chain for fifty years. Nay more, with ordinary surroundings, a dog remains a particular sort of a dog because of its inheritance and organisation. So a man is not only

human, chiefly because his parents had human brain, but he differs from all other men mainly because his parents—one or both, though probably not in equal degree—transmitted to him one particular sort of brain.

There are, however, numerous thinkers, who believe that the environment or circumstance is all in all, and that organisation, the brain, and heredity are "of no account"—these are individuals of purely literary training, a training chiefly based on theological or supernatural ideals. Languages arose in times of fervent supernatural beliefs and have immensely helped to prolong the vitality of those beliefs. Even rationalists of high distinction but whose education has had no bearing on the truths of nature have not escaped the supernatural bias.

Stuart Mill and Buckle believed that mind has little to do with brain. Carlyle, a pure product of training in letters, jeered at Darwin but was inconsistent enough to affirm that two fools never yet produced a wise child. The disciples of Mill and Buckle declare in effect that all men *begin* alike: they do not say all brains are alike because, with ostrich instinct, they will not see brain, do not like it, will not speak of it. All the world's a stage and on it is enacted a cease-

less play of nerve-action: it is held however that the play may be performed even though the character of nerve be left out. The play suffers in consequence. Mill reports that he made strenuous attempts to found a science of character; he frankly admitted his repeated failure. The task he undertook is immensely difficult, but the first step in it is to recognise that it is a physiological task and that character is a group, of properties and forces belonging to living-nerve-matter.

If the influence of environment were predominant, if the nerve masses which have been found, whether in peoples or in individuals, to be fittest to survive the evolutional change of twenty million years could be radically changed by the circumstance of twenty years, the reign of chaos and dissolution would certainly begin. The stability of society—nay the stability of life itself—is based on the very limited mutability of nerve structure and action. No doubt abnormal and violent circumstance may, as we have already seen, change nerve; alcoholic excess may, injuries and diseases may: a pistol shot may put an end to it altogether.

Again let it be emphatically stated, that, as the structure and composition and weight of the brain so are its capabilities; so is its outlook; so

are the judgments it pronounces. Notwithstanding that the pig's conscious or comprehended world is one world, the Fuegian's another, the European's another, we may be quite sure the pig never dreams that there are beings having larger nerve than he and therefore having higher capabilities. The Fuegian has perfect confidence in his own knowledge and judgment. But the amazing circumstance is that the European, in this self-confidence, is no wit superior to the pig or the Fuegian.

The weight of the human brain is some forty-nine or fifty ounces. It is astounding and amusing that the fifty ounce brain has but few doubts; the less fine its organisation is, the less informed it is, the more youthful it is, the fewer doubts it has. The fifty-ounce mass lays down its laws, scatters its epithets ('materialist' is one of them) imposes its belief, deals out eternal bliss to one of its fellows, and eternal misery to another: it does all this, and much more, with no gleam of the truth that to a sixty-ounce brain the world would be a different world—a world of larger capabilities, wider knowledge, of higher ideals, kindlier conduct, and we may be sure of less confident verdicts. To a people of, say, sixty-ounce brains the philosophies, the psychological and metaphysical systems, and the

religions of a fifty-ounce brain would seem not a little foolish.

Living brain in all animal life—in philosophers and in dogs—is characterised by consciousness. The property of consciousness is an inscrutable marvel but so are the gravitation of an apple and the light of an electric wire loop. The mystery would be still greater if consciousness remained after the removal of brain, or if the electric light continued when the loop was removed. Conscious matter—matter which enables the philosopher to think, the lark to sing, and the rattlesnake to hiss—is doubtless the supreme marvel. Among marvels one must be greatest: but the greatest, whether in man, or in lark, or in rattlesnake, does not call for supernatural explanation merely because it is the greatest. Mind as an action, a mere method of use, cannot be acted upon, cannot be impressed, or developed, or enfeebled: this is language which can be applied to brain only.

Mind is as much the action or use of living brain as contractility is the action of living muscle. The frequent expression "mind and matter" is no more reasonable than would be the habit of saying "contractility and muscle." To affirm of a philosopher who possesses a powerful brain that he has a powerful mind, strange as it may seem, is as absurd as to say of an athlete

that he has well developed contractility when we mean, in reality, that he has well developed muscle.

Not only does every part of the brain touch every other part by countless microscopic fingers, but brain stretches out directly continuous fingers to the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the skin—all these organs are, as it were, delicately constructed finger-tips. More than this: it may be said that, in effect, certain nerve-fingers are indefinitely prolonged. It has been remarked that the silver probe by means of which a surgeon feels a bullet deep in the flesh is merely a prolongation of his finger; so air and ether are long fingers by which the brain touches the hill and stream and distant cannon—nay actually touches the sun and stars.

That the word and idea of 'mind' should have taken the place of the word 'brain' in popular usage is not perhaps inexplicable. Apart from the supernatural, spiritual, and spiritist view of a separate and detachable entity is the evolutional fact that the brain, in all animal life, needs to be so strongly protected as to be hidden from view. If the eye were more helpfully constructed, and we had before us the living brain so arranged that its supremely marvellous structures and their workings could be seen, the word 'mind' would fall into comparative disuse.

The illustration is inadequate but it is not too much to say that if a living horse had never been seen, and if we were moved from place to place by a perpetually concealed animal, the epithets which we now apply to the horse we should invariably apply to movement: we should habitually say movement is well-behaved or unruly this morning; movement jibs or movement bolts.

The rapidity with which messages are transmitted through the material media of air and ether and rapidly conducted along nerve pathways to the central nerve masses helps doubtless to foster popular illusions. Two illustrations may be usefully pondered over: a town-dwelling man, possessed of more than usual emotional and poetic nerve, is suddenly brought into the presence of a strikingly beautiful prospect; his eyes instantly fill with tears. Now what has happened? Broadly and omitting all detail, this: impulses of a certain sort of matter strike the retina, thence nerve currents run to groups of innumerable nerve-cells along innumerable nerve links. One group gives light, another gives comprehension, another yields poetic emotion, another stirs the tear gland to action. All these are material steps and all are capable of exact measurement; yet so rapidly do they follow each other that they appear to be immediate and

simultaneous. In a moment the whole prospect has actually touched responsive brain. An indiscreet friend suddenly tells a mother, who is endowed with a full measure of emotional nerve, that her sailor-boy lies "in his vast and wandering grave." The woman instantly, it would seem, falls in a swoon or it may be in death. Here one brain comes into material contact with another brain as surely as the surgeon touches a sunken missile with his silver finger. The message flies to various nerve masses in which are physically imprinted ancient memories and deep affections — thence, with unbroken continuity, brain cells turn as it were to touch and stop the heart. And all this is the work of a few seconds.

SUMMARY.

1. It is here taken for granted, though not affecting the argument in these pages, that we have some limited knowledge of the reality of substance within and around us; and that of alleged spiritualisms and supernaturalisms we know nothing whatever. It is assumed also that mind is a property or an action of a certain sort of matter found only in animal life.

2. The mysterious 'something' in and around

us is none the better if called 'spirit,' and none the worse if called 'matter.'

3. Character and conduct are not affected by the utmost diversity of opinions on matter and spirit. In loftiness of ideals and adequacy of achievement materialists and naturalists stand on no lower level than idealists and supernaturalists.

4. The amount, sort, and state of nerve in each living thing, determines for that living thing—mouse or man—the nature and range of its outer world. A five-ounce brain lives in one world; a fifty-ounce brain lives in another world: a sixty-ounce brain would live in still another.

5. Different amounts and sorts of nerve, in different individuals and peoples give different opinions and conduct, different morals, religions, polities, laws, and institutions.

6. All causes which change thought or feeling or morality or action, change these only by first changing nerve states.

7. Mind is merely the action or use of nerve-matter just as contractility is the action of muscle-matter. To say that 'mind' is weak or strong is as absurd as to say that contractility is flabby or is well-developed. It is brain, not mind, which thinks, is moral or immoral, which feels

and acts, which sees, hears, talks, reads, writes, imagines, remembers—and much else.

8. The word 'mind' would be as little used as 'contractility' were it not that living brain is not only vastly more delicately organised but is also, from evolutional exigencies, concealed from view; while muscle, quiescent or active, is in great degree open to investigation. Again the rapidity of communication between the numerous brain-areas is so rapid as to give, to the uninstructed, the impression of a single entity exercising many actions.

9. Brain is characterised chiefly by consciousness. Consciousness is the greatest of many great marvels—but one must be greatest. The marvel is as great in toads and pigs as in men and dogs. If 'matter cannot think' then toads and pigs have souls.

10. Nerve, the highest form of matter, is in touch always, directly or indirectly, with all the other and lower forms of matter. It stretches out fingers of air to the thunder-cloud, and fingers of ether to the sun and moon and stars.

This chapter it should be added is put forward simply as introductory to the following chapter on 'Moral Nerve.'

Chapter II.

MORAL NERVE:

SOME GUIDING TRUTHS.

In this as in all other chapters I refrain from using the words and methods of speculative thinkers. Truths have many degrees of importance; but those belonging to nerve-matter, that higher matter which in animals and in men has the property of consciousness, are surely central truths. From these I shall attempt to brush aside in some degree the mists of supernaturalism, metaphysics, and of psychology as ordinarily conceived. It is high time to lift the great moral question out of the play-ground of metaphysicians and theologians. Did not the sanest of men, Goethe, declare that no light descends to metaphysical deeps and none ascends to supernatural heights? All the problems and poetries of life are to be found in the light, such as it is, which lies between these two darknesses.

Morality need not be defined here: we know what it is; of all our 'knowledges' it is the

fullest. Volumes of mystifying definitions are constantly issuing from theological and literary sources. In other quarters we find egoisms and altruisms formulated to their last gasp. Meanwhile, in evolving peoples, morality slowly but inevitably rises; slowly and inevitably it falls in dissolving peoples.

It will surprise the average and the select man alike to be told that in men, *and in animals,* the moral sense is predominant; that it is an instinct deeply lodged in every living nervous organisation. It is true of both, but is even more true of animals than of men, that the impulse to do right is stronger than the capacity to think clearly. In all the mixed problems of human life the ethical elements are more clearly visible than the intellectual. Nay more, our sense of ethical duty is more adequate than our knowledge of what is fittest for even bodily well-being. Only a few men can measure and weigh the planets; no one knows precisely what he should do in the matter of food, or drink, or clothing, or exercise, or rest, or sleep; but every man strives to preserve from danger the lives of his fellows.

The old teaching that morality is an exclusively human possession has led to vast direct and indirect mischief. It probably sprang from the wide-spread and abiding error that there is and

can be no morality which does not defer to human needs and conform to human opinions. The error is part of the still larger misconception that all things, celestial and mundane, were created for man's benefit. The anthropocentric theory has, by the way, much to answer for. Broadly and briefly the morality of a unit consists in its seeking *first* the well-being of the aggregate to which it belongs. A good man seeks the well-being of men, a good tiger seeks the well-being of tigers. There are no doubt certain deep-down moral elements common to all living things. No animal kills every other animal it comes near; or seizes and keeps everything within its reach; or habitually commits abominable crimes. That living thing, moreover, which, having the power and opportunity to be immoral, refrains, consciously or *unconsciously*, from using such power and opportunities, is a moral thing. All animals, including men, have this morality in large degree. To say that there is no morality unless there is a consciousness of morality is to say that in early men, and in multitudes of modern men, there is no moral sense. A faculty may certainly exist although there be no introspective recognition of its existence. If an animal does not say to itself "I live, I think, I am moral," it neverthe-

less may be actually alive, may actually think, may be actually moral. But, in addition to a certain bed-rock morality, each community of animals has its own particular code of ethics. In the slow drawing up of their respective codes tigers did not ask for moral guidance from men nor men from tigers. A tiger of unimpeachable morals (of the tiger-code) may tear a man to pieces for his dinner; for his and his family's sustenance a good man may cut a lamb's throat and yet pass through the human court of ethics without a stain on his character.

If indeed an impartial ethical adjudicator could step on to this planet he would probably say that men, more than animals, are "red in tooth and claw." He would even declare that it is the brute, not the man, who forgives his erring fellow seventy times seven. The four-legged moralists however when stirred to action are perhaps more summary in their executive methods than the two-legged—hence perhaps their greater actual morality. When the vagabond wolf and the rogue elephant are driven forth from their communities they may not take mates with them and propagate their like. Wolves and elephants, even more than men, overlook much folly and tolerate much stupidity in their fellows but they confine within narrow limits the individuals who

flout their respective moral codes. If, in any animal community, four-footed philanthropists had ever arisen demanding that their erring fellow quadrupeds should not be 'degraded' and 'demoralised' by punishment, we may be sure that sooner or later that community would have come to an end.

How then came men and animals to be first of all moral? To be moral whatever else they were not? To possess in excess of any other sense the sense of right and wrong? It is because they possess moral nerve-matter in corresponding degree. Morality is nothing more than the action of moral grey-matter. There is no morality where there is no nerve, and where there is living moral nerve there is and must be morality. It is as impossible to keep living moral nerve quiet as it is to keep the living muscle of a child quiet. Vital function is the secret of Moral Obligation. If nerve-action was the only morality of Marcus Aurelius let us think not less of Marcus Aurelius but more of nerve and nerve action. Men should have many reverences — reverences for truth, nature, poetry, art, but his chief reverence should be for the mystic wonderful moral stuff of our greatest moral characters: for its observance no cathedral is impressive enough, no reverence too instinct with awe.

Whatever the amount, or kind, or state, or change, which characterises moral nerve, so will be the degree, and kind, and changes, of moral conduct.

How came the moral nerve or moral apparatus into existence? The answer, in an evolutional sense, is clear: it is a factor essential to life. There can be no animal existence unless it is associated with moral properties; and moral properties as well as all other properties are unknown save as properties of matter; that is they are properties of some sort of known natural stuff—not of something supernatural or unknown. Some living things contrive to exist without skin, some without flesh, others have no bones, but all living things have some sort of moral stuff. Of all things fitted to survive in the long evolutional conflict moral nerve was the fittest. At one time men could *live* only on condition that they were moral; later it came to pass they could be *happy* only when they were moral. Moral nerve began when society began. Broadly speaking society began when two jelly specks existed in place of one, and each speck refrained from injuring the other speck. From such ethical beginnings our Platos and Spencers are merely the amplifications and elaborations of one hundred million years of ceaseless change.

If we turn now more directly to men and to communities of men—always remembering that what the individuals are the community is—the conclusion is forced upon us that progress in persons or peoples alike depends mainly on the amount and the growth in persons or peoples of moral nerve; and that the scantiness and deterioration of that nerve in units or aggregates attends on personal or social regress.

Morality is a property of moral nerve in some such fashion as intellect is a property of intellectual nerve, as sensation is a property of sensory nerve. It is a root principle of all investigation to begin with simple examples. A dove and a hawk have alike beaks and claws: a dove is gentle because it has in effect gentle nerve; a hawk is fierce because it has fierce nerve. The gentle and submissive dog on the one hand, and the fierce turbulent dog on the other, surely have different, physically different, nerve stuff. Two children have tongues and other speech organs alike but one child has voluble nerve, another has taciturn nerve. The timid man has timid nerve. The bold man has bold nerve. History tells of one race of kings who in old age went out to die in stormy seas; and of another race of kinglets who, living or dying, always shrank from salt water. The two races, kings and subjects, had

different nervous organisations. Thus in birds and dogs and men gentleness, turbulence, volubility, taciturnity, timidity, and courage, are properties of nerve stuff: Or are these properties found only in souls—souls of birds, and dogs, and men ?

Whether certain nerve-matter is exclusively set apart for moral purposes only, or whether the nerve which yields moral action yields also intellectual and emotional actions, does not affect the argument now put forward. It is contended here that there exists somewhere and somehow within the skull a material—that is a natural—moral apparatus. I cannot but think however that there are grounds for believing that the nerve which exercises moral function is more or less separate nerve. It is separate in the sense in which speech-nerve and sight-nerve are separate, but like them it freely communicates with all other varieties of nerve. Research is more and more bringing to light special localisations of nerve actions. When we consider that there are hundreds of millions of nerve cells, and thousands of millions of nerve links, it would indeed be strange if a mother tended a dying child with the same nerve with which she adds up her milliner's bill. If the movements of the forefinger are determined by separately localised

areas of nerve it is incredible that the nerve which recognises right from wrong should not differ from that which repeats the multiplication table; from that which admires beauty and hates ugliness. If one nerve-mass is common to intellect, and passion, and morals, the man who is strong in one of these faculties should be strong in all; the man who is poor in one should be poor in all. This it is needless to say is not the experience of daily life. Then again, while intellect and the emotions vary strikingly in different individuals the moral sense is, normally, more or less uniform. Evolution leaves in existence, intellectually, much stupidity; leaves, emotionally, much blunt or coarse feeling; but it demands a certain standard of moral conduct. Our neighbours differ greatly in their religious beliefs or no beliefs; in their philosophic systems—if they have any; in their political principles and social polities: what these are we do not much care to know, but we care deeply that our neighbours should be honest and free from coarse violence. We are well pleased if they come near to the highest levels of human morality —gentleness and honour. If our neighbour's moral nerve is inadequate, is in fact abnormal, he ceases to be our neighbour: he finds his proper neighbours in the criminal or abnormal

class. Perhaps the most striking peculiarity of moral nerve, and one which tells in favour of a certain separateness is its plasticity, its greater amenability, within certain limits, to change in response to external circumstances. It is impossible to make stupid nerve clever; it is not easy to make clever nerve stupid; but inadequate moral nerve may be in some degree improved, and fairly adequate may be more or less vitiated. How far inadequate nerve may be supplemented by 'substitutional' moral nerve will be discussed in another chapter.

Neither human life nor animal life could have survived the storms of evolution had moral nerve possessed the rigidity of intellectual and 'passional' nerve. Surgical science throws significant light on the question of localisation. It is known that injury, or disease, in a given area of grey matter suspends the power of speech. In like manner some injuries to the head have been known to enfeeble the moral sense and leave the intellect little if at all the worse, while other injuries have impaired the intellectual faculty and not the moral.

How far will the localisation of nerve-areas be found to extend? Is there, for example, religious nerve? Or political nerve? We must, in reply, never forget to distinguish between the nature of

a nerve mass and the various uses to which its action may be put. Character is made up of endowments and propensities. Probably all endowments have special nerve allotments. The propensities are the actions of these allotted masses. This is not the place to describe or even to enumerate the limited group of endowments or the almost unlimited group of propensities. Among the more conspicuous endowments, however, some being intellectual, some emotional, some moral, we find cleverness dominant in one individual and, in effect, dulness in another; activity in one, pensiveness in another; here gentleness, honour, reverence, courage; there rudeness, violence, cowardice. The endowments are comparatively simple and less numerous; the propensities are, it may possibly be, simple, but more frequently they are complex and numerous. While the strength or weakness of the propensities depends on the weight and character of the nerve endowment, their sort and number are in great degree influenced by circumstance and environment. The endowments are weightier and more numerous in the sagacious; they are slighter and fewer in the foolish. Every man says to himself "I will be wise," only a few men have the nerve-masses which give out wisdom. To discover and analyse the endowments on the

one hand, and the propensities on the other, of the names in history, or in public life, or in our own circles, is a fruitful and fascinating study; it gives the master key to the interpretation of character.

It will not be amiss to point again to the fact that every part of the brain is in free and instantaneous communication with every other part: that the nerve-homes are numbered by hundreds of millions, and the pathways between them by thousands of millions. The nerve-masses of all the faculties touch each other at countless points: touch for help, or for hindrance, or for correction. Intellectual nerve speaks to moral nerve; moral nerve to intellectual; emotional nerve speaks to both, and both to emotional. But the moral-equipment nerve is characterised more than any other endowment-nerve by simplicity and directness, and hence the greater the simplicity and directness of the moral propensity.

To return: there is no single religious nerve-endowment. Religion is a *propensity* involving the action of several endowments; many nerve centres contribute messages and many nerve-pathways are travelled upon. Religion may be briefly defined as *a homage to an ideal.* The ideal may be supernatural or natural and either of these may be elevated or sordid; the homage

too may be the homage of fear, or of reverence, or of love. The choice or adoption of a religious ideal involves the action of various intellectual endowments; the homage being emotional will be coloured by the nature and the number of the various emotional endowments involved. The origins of morality and of religion are different; even eminent divines have admitted that there is no necessary connection between the two. Morality was from the first essential to the well-being of the living; religion came later and sprang from fear of the dead or spirits of the dead. Morality is primary, enduring, and fundamental. Supernatural religions are parasitic and transitory—transitory in relation to evolutional time. They arise in the early stages of civilisation and, in evolving peoples at least, decline in the more advanced stage. By parity of data and reasoning it would be easy to show that, as it is with the religious propensity, so is it with the various political, social, as also with the various science and art propensities; each of them results from the action of several and diverse nerve endowments.

We may with propriety divide all 'knowledges' into two classes: those which more directly concern the structure and action of nerve matter, and those which are less directly concerned.

Ethics, logic, grammar, are examples of the first class; they treat of nerve matter. Astronomy, geology, chemistry, are examples of the second class; these treat of the truths of matter which lie outside the skull.

One sort of nerve yields the science and the art of reasoning. The action of another sort gives the science and art of grammar. Just as the rules of logic are based on the action of the best reasoning nerve, the rules of grammar on the best speech nerve, so in like manner the rules of moral conduct are founded on the action of the finest moral nerve; this is found within the skulls of the best conducted men. We have no knowledge of intellectual or moral or emotional manifestations apart from the presence of various kinds of living nerve and where any form of living nerve exists it must act—action is the law of life.

SUMMARY.

1. In animals, and in men, the moral faculty predominates over all other faculties. In animals, even more than in men, the impulse to do right is more powerful than the capacity to think clearly.

2. There are certain deep-down moral elements common to all animals; in addition each com-

munity of animals has its own special code constructed for its own benefit.

3. The principle underlying the moral code of each community of living things is this: the unit shall put the well-being of the aggregate before its own well-being. A wolf, consciously or unconsciously, seeks first the welfare of its pack; an elephant of its herd; a man of his race. On these conditions only have wolves and elephants and men escaped destruction in the long evolutional conflict.

4. Much of the morality of animals, *and of men,* is doubtless negative and unconscious. Mutual forgiveness in animals is not the less beautiful because it is unaccompanied by criticism and introspection.

5. Patient and forgiving as animals are when the moral need arises they act with decision. Criminal wolves, for example, and criminal elephants also, are not only summarily expelled from their communities but they may not take mates with them to reproduce their like. On such penal laws too, has been, and ever will be, based all moral growth.

6. Morality is a property, an action, of living nerve. Men and brutes have the sense of right-and-wrong in excess of other senses because they

possess the nerve of right-and-wrong in excess of other varieties of nerve.

7. How came this moral nerve into existence? Because of all factors it is the one factor essential to life, animal or human. Moral nerve began when society began and, in effect, society began when the first two jelly specks lived peaceably together.

8. Whether moral nerve has other actions than moral action, or whether it is more or less separate and independent nerve does not affect the argument here put forward. There are however many reasons for believing that it is to a great degree specialised nerve.

9. The loftiest morals, the clearest ratiocination, the most correct speech, are respectively the products of the best moral, the best reasoning, and the best speech nerve. If all moral codes, all logical formulæ, and all grammatical rules were lost, living nerve could get along without them; could speedily restore them in even better form.

Chapter III.

HERBERT SPENCER AS A MORALIST.

It is usual for the fervent believer to imagine that if his religion came to an end morality would come to an end with it. Many statesmen and a few philosophers have held that religion is a convenient means of maintaining the morality of the multitude. The illustrious author of the "Synthetic Philosophy" considers that religion is the basis of current morals, and fears that if it were destroyed before a new basis is ready a moral interregnum would follow.

Mr. Spencer was the first to grasp and expound the evolutional theory in its entirety. His standing as an ethicist is beyond question. An eminent Nonconformist divine, himself given more to rhetoric than to formulation, has remarked that Mr. Spencer is rather a master of formulæ than a philosopher. But if he who sifts, clarifies, unifies, and *formulates* a vast range of knowledge is not a philosopher—who is?

It is contended here, however, that from the standpoint taken in these pages, Mr. Spencer,

in his views on ethical questions, under-estimates the potency of nerve-organisation. In his ethical or other writings he puts physiology sedulously in the background. He admits that physical nerve change precedes all manifestations of intelligence: having admitted the fact, he takes comparatively little further notice of it. He frankly avows his preference for the psychological interpretation of physiological actions, a preference which, if psychology is nothing more than a mode of speaking of the functions of nerve structures, is not at all helpful.

Mr. Spencer, however, it may be observed, not only gives no countenance to the theological and spiritual (and spiritist) view that mind is an independent and detachable entity but has helped to show how this idea had its origin in savage life. It may, and with much force, be urged that Mr. Spencer has no alternative but to use current language, and that the language of popular use is psychological and was coined in an era of fantastic psychology and spiritual phantoms —coined when physiological truths were undreamt of; coined when heaven and earth were believed to be filled with supernatural beings ever ready to interfere—not always with benefit—in human affairs. But if a great teacher is compelled to express knowledge in terms of ignorance, he

should at least from time to time bring himself and his disciples from psychological cloudland down to solid physiological ground.

In his foreshadowings of a remote ethical future, Mr. Spencer's imagination is but little restrained by matters of bodily organisation. A supremely lofty ideal is held before us: unhappily it is loftier than inner nerve organisation and outer circumstance will ever permit. Socal environment can never become entirely satisfactory so long as physical environment is what it is—and this environment is not likely to improve. Falls, blows, injury, disease, and the effects of extreme heat and cold, of hurricane, flood, fire, drought and famine will always hinder nerve organisation from reaching the highest conceivable levels.

Peoples have different histories, different thought, different morals, because they have different nerve-organisation. Different effects have necessarily different causes. A people whose moral history records a succession of massacres, Bartholomew and others, as leading events, has one sort of nerve; and a people whose characteristic experiences are religious movements, Puritan and others, have quite another sort.

A sovereign may walk alone through the streets of any Scandinavian capital with perfect safety: if unattended in the streets of Madrid he

would carry his life in his hands. And all this solely because Scandinavian nerve differs from Spanish nerve. The difference cannot at present be seen under the microscope; but neither can the difference be seen between the nerve cells of light and those of sound, or between those of speech and those of thought. Does Mr. Spencer, do ethical students, do speculative formulators, of purely literary training, give adequate attention to this difference?

Inadequate recognition of physiological considerations is conspicuous in his treatment of individual virtues and vices. Yet, at root, every virtue and every vice is the outcome of a certain quantity and sort and state of nerve stuff. Surely, volubility and taciturnity are clearly matters of nerve organisation; so, also, are idleness and industry, chastity and unchastity. In both idleness and excess of the sexual impulse the physician, as a physiologist, will often prove helpful when psychological formulæ and moral precepts have proved utterly useless.

I cannot but think that the most remarkable of Mr. Spencer's deviations from physiological teaching are his ideas of the origin of morality, and his fear of a moral interregnum, should the popular belief in the religious basis of moral obligation be too hurriedly undermined. It

has been remarked that a man's character is moulded upon his religion. Mr. Spencer does not go so far as this, but he considers—and this chiefly concerns us here—that religions precede and give their colour to moralities. In putting forward this dictum he seems to forget another observation, made by himself more than once or twice, that men are influenced more by the opinions of their fellows than by the fear of future punishment or hope of future reward. Would that Mr. Spencer had widened and deepened this seemingly simple observation into a great ethical system.

The belief, to diverge for a moment, that character is moulded on religion seems to be the exact opposite of the truth. Not only do the followers of one and the same religion differ in character, but even the individual members of every sect have also different characters. We have a hundred diverse religions, but we have forty million diverse characters, simply because behind forty million dissimilar faces there are forty million dissimilar brains. Physiology, and history, and current life, alike show, not only that morals long preceded religions, but that the religion of both individuals and peoples is coloured by the morality of the individual and the morality of the people.

Not only does Mr. Spencer, in common with

all other ethicists, see no striking connection between morality and the nervous organisation, but his writings make it clear that he puts the origin of the moral sense quite late in the course of evolutional time. Mr. Spencer in stating that morals follow religion, contends that there is no fixed and universal code of morals; that a virtue in one people is possibly a vice in another: the statement is partly true and partly untrue. It is true that there is no full and universally accepted moral code. But it is no less true that a certain bed-rock code is found wherever life is found. This 'bed-rock' morality puts everywhere some curb on murder, violence, theft, lying. Under exceptional circumstances murder may be approved in one tribe, ingenious theft in another. The young Fijian, for example, is not happy until he brings home a human head; but his action does not come under the head of morality as conventionally understood—he is fighting for a certain status in Fijian opinion. If murder, theft, and lying were habitual within the boundaries of any community, and had contributed during countless generations to the well-being of that community, murder, theft and lying would in reality be virtues. Is this conceivable?

Mr. Spencer states, in language and under circumstances which compel our deepest sympathy,

that he hastened to complete his treatise on ethics because of the peril which would probably follow the disappearance of one basis of morality before another was ready to take its place. If there were any real danger of an ethical collapse, and philosophy could save a morality which supernatural religion was no longer able to sustain, doubtless Mr. Spencer, perhaps more effectively than any of his compeers, could furnish such philosophy.

What Mr. Spencer does not see, what the great world of literary thinkers does not see, is—again not forgetting the law of action and interaction—that religious creeds, philosophic systems, and moral codes, are not the producers but the products of living human nerve. It is needful to be emphatic on this point, at the risk of some repetition. Just as all that appertains to correct logic comes from the best reasoning nerve, and all that is correct in grammar comes from the best speech nerve, so all that is loftiest in morals issues from best moral nerve—and this lies in the interior of the skulls of the best-conducted men. Such, it appears to me, are the dicta revealed by the light of physiology.

Historic considerations confirm the lessons nculcated by physiology. The advent of a new religion yields nothing new in morals. Freeman

reluctantly admits that the introduction of Christianity into England, whatever other results it had, did not change English character. When religion grows in intensity morality does not grow with it, nor is religious decay attended by moral decay. The ages, and the peoples, marked by the most fervent religious belief and the most scrupulous religious observance, are those most deeply stained by violence and cruelty.

Herbert Spencer on War.

The question of war falls directly or indirectly within the domain of ethics. Mr. Spencer denounces war and "militarism" with constantly-increasing vehemence. Militarism at this moment, he urges—with singular forgetfulness of the past—is dragging us to the verge of ruin: in his vehemence he forgets, not historic record only, but evolutional methods. The one essential underlying root-principle of evolution is struggle. Struggle implies both effort and resistance. Struggle is, in effect, war—war sometimes of aggression, but more frequently, it is true, of endurance and defence. The very phrase "to struggle"—of Scandinavian origin—means, in the opinion of some authorities, primarily "to strike." In human life there is an unbroken series of actual contests—of battles. A mother

gently restrains or coerces her infant; a policeman strives bodily with a criminal; a body of soldiers combat a mob of rioters; a number of fishermen resist the encroachment of alien fishermen; one navy fights another navy, one army another army. All these gradational and inevitable incidents are the results of evolutional methods.

What war has effected in bringing about the present position of advanced peoples is clearly shown by Mr. E. B. Tylor, an unrivalled authority on the factors and stages of civilisation. Early societies, he remarks, ("Anthropology," Chap. xvi.), when at peace make no progress because at such time "ancestral custom is administered by great-grandfathers." When war breaks out, stronger and more intelligent rule is needed. "*The changes which have shaped the descendants of wild hordes into civilised nations have been in great measure the work of the war chief.*" The italics are mine.

In certain grave crises, evolution has left no alternative save war. The advocates of peace no doubt serve a useful purpose and are themselves the product of what may be called collateral evolutional forces, for from the great central stream of a civilised people's life there are offshoots or eddies: of these are the Tolstois, the Friends,

and others. Tolstoi, at any rate, if fanatical, is logical: he would not stay the axe which was about to cleave his child's head. Such visionaries are in this undignified position—they owe their own existence to the methods which they denounce. Only through the militarism of his forefathers was Mr. Spencer born and enabled to denounce militarism.

Apart from the consideration of war, Mr. Spencer too frequently assumes that, in the long run, all peoples are tending, or will tend, to a civilisation which forbids war. But all peoples are not evolving—not even in Europe. The dissolution of peoples—with its decadent and less moral man—as well as the evolution of peoples, will not cease so long as peoples exist, hence the time of universal peace is unhappily far off. But does not Mr. Spencer answer himself? He says ("Social Statics") "No one can be perfectly moral till all are moral; no one can be perfectly happy till all are happy." Surely it is equally true that no nation can be perfectly peaceful till all are peaceful.

Chapter IV.

HUXLEY AS A MORALIST.

Mr. Huxley—brilliant as investigator, reasoner, and teacher in many fields, was, seemingly, overtaken by a sort of conservative languor when, in his closing and ailing years, he delivered the Romanes Address on "Evolution and Ethics." It is not too much to say that he never fully embraced the evolution theory as an all sufficing principle. Had he at any time gained as complete a grasp of the principle of evolution as Mr. Spencer possesses, and further, had Mr. Spencer gone through the physiological training of a Huxley, the world would be even more in debt to the two great masters. Not a little confusion, inconsistency, and inaccuracy mark the Oxford deliverance: on these points brief comment only is permissible here and will be confined strictly to guiding truths.

The address is a long and laboured effort to show that the moral element is at variance with the other elements which go to the making of man. The natural or 'cosmic' man

is, we are told, a very ancient personage, but the 'man within,' the 'ethical man,' is, it would seem, comparatively a new comer. The younger individual is ashamed of the elder and the elder's progenitors. The older man, indeed, retains traces of 'the tiger and the ape,'—traces which the younger man feels called upon to treat 'with axe and rope.' Tigers and apes are sad criminals, and there was a time when all men were, alas, criminals also. It is true that, now, only a few of us come to the axe and the rope, but our remote fathers all deserved, every man of them, to be either hanged or decapitated.

In his attempt to show that morality is something apart, something acquired and artificial, Huxley displays, it may be said in passing, one of not a few inconsistencies. In one page we are told that primitive men were hostile to each other; they thought only of themselves; they trod each other down; they seized and kept all that they could lay hands on. In another page we discover that they were sociable, very inquisitive, given to mimicry, and *deferential to surrounding opinion*. (The italics are mine.) Huxley here, by the way, overlooked the fundamental truth, so repeatedly urged in these pages, that this obedience of the individual to the opinion of the community was, and is, and ever will be, the

prime necessity of animal life, and the basis of all true morality. Possibly this obedience was, at one time, more or less a restraint; but in the process of the ages restraint—a denial of present good—becomes a habit, and long habit becomes, in time, happiness. In other words, it came to pass that restraint—restraining nerve—alone sheltered the individual, and therefore saved society, from ultimate destruction.

Mr. Huxley's most serious errors are those which he shares with the multitude—the literary and theological multitude. Animals, we are told, are devoid of the moral faculty, and early men were no better off. I have already discussed somewhat fully the question of morality in animals. Tigers have their own unformulated but strictly-binding code of morals; so have apes. They could not have lived without them. Within the tiger is an ethic tiger; within the ape an inner ape. If the disobedient wolf and the erring elephant are expelled from the society of their fellows, we may be sure that sinning tigers and sinning apes come also to a bad end. Whatever may happen to a wicked man, a wicked animal—wicked to his own society—never flourishes like the green bay tree. Of course tigers, and philosophers, must live; and tigers, in common with philosophers, seize and keep their dinners

and warn off encroaching tigers and philosophers.

It may be asked here, Does the conflict, as Huxley conceived it, actually exist? Evolutional truths give it no countenance. Before any living thing is fitted to escape the abiding storm of natural or evolutional forces, every component part of that living thing must be fitted to each other. The rattlesnake only exists because all the constituents within its skin are fitted to each other: the ethical rattlesnake, too, must be in unison with the cosmic rattlesnake—it is the price of its existence. So is it with the 'cosmic' man and the ethical man. A man's skin must be fitted to cover all the various parts within it; muscles and bones must suit each other; these and his brain must be fitted to act in unison; nay, the various structures of his brain must keep well abreast of each other. Intellectual nerve, moral nerve, emotional nerve, sensory nerve, motor nerve, must all be, more or less, harmonious partners—or the firm perishes. So far the normal man: it is the abnormal man—the man lacking moral nerve—who, slowly or quickly, arrives at the axe or rope, or some other unpleasant end.

True, the congruity of the constituent elements of a unit is not perfect. But the intellectual man and the ethical man agree with each other better than, say, the intellectual man and the

BOSTON MEDICAL

muscular man within us. Our muscles and bones are in daily conflict with our intellectual demands. The brain travels in seven-leagued boots; muscles and bones crawl far behind. The breathing apparatus is comparatively clumsy; an athletic runner is checked in his course because his ribs cannot keep pace with his heart. In fact the circulating man fights the breathing man.

The Romanes Lecturer illustrates his views of evolved and natural elements on the one hand, and acquired or artificial elements on the other, by the planting and cultivation of a modern garden on a weed-grown Sussex down: an artificially treated area he calls it. The illustration is not a happy one. To the true evolutionist there is nothing artificial. Certain given forces, operating under certain conditions, leave not only gardens and wildernesses behind, but leave all other things and happenings also. In other words the forces of nature, acting amidst ceaseless change, in multitudinous grooves of circumstance, during incalculable time, leave, here a paper rose, there a hedge rose; here a rag doll, there its little flesh-and-blood mistress; leave here a garden, there a wilderness; here a nightingale, there a centipede; leave here a saint, and there a sinner.

Mr. Huxley, not without a trace of plaintiveness, complains that there is much evil in

evolution: that evolution sanctions the murderer and the thief. Beyond all doubt, evolution and its attendant dissolution involve a vast amount of evil. There can, of course, be no evolution from perfection, so that evolution at its best is nothing more than a journey from something faulty to something less faulty. Or, to change the figure, evolution may be looked upon as a destructive stream, which leaves behind comparatively few living things—those which happen to be sheltered by certain protective qualities—and leaves those only for a brief period.

It is the greatest misfortune of naturalism, as well as of science, that it is compelled to use the language coined in the era of supernatural beliefs. Mr. Huxley, for example, is obliged to say evolution 'sanctions' this, or 'forbids' that, or 'predestines' something else. There is no more ground for supposing all this than for supposing that a volcano 'sanctions' the destruction of this city, or 'forbids' the destruction of that, or 'predestines' the fate of a third. 'Man worked his way to the top,' says the lecturer, when he really means that always during incalculable time the man who had a little more brain than his fellow escaped destruction.

The word "struggle" well illustrates the inadequacy of pre-scientific language. It suited

the views of a Lamarck; it is misleading in a Darwinian. All dramatists wish—or struggle, in a sense, but struggle in vain—to be Shakespeares: only one dramatist had Shakespeare's marvellous brain—and he did *not* 'struggle'—greatly to Thomas Carlyle's surprise. All sopranos wish to be Jenny Linds, but only one soprano had Jenny Lind's larynx.

To return. The Romanes lecture, with its notes, is marked by a strange inconsistency. The professor, with strenuous and prolonged effort, strove to show that the ethical sense is an acquired, if not an artificial, sense: that the ethical man has only recently taken up his abode in the natural man. Then, in note 20, in the published address, he, in less than four lines, declares that "*strictly speaking*," the ethical process itself "*is part and parcel of the general process of evolution.*" (The italics are mine.) In other words, after taking great pains, on the platform, to prove that morality is *not* a product of evolution he has scarcely descended from that platform when he affirms that really and truly morality *is* a product of evolution. It seems then after all that the inner man and the outer man came slowly into existence by similar methods.

Chapter V.

SUBSTITUTIONAL MORALS: THE PRINCIPLE OF PUNISHMENT.

It is said by persons of purely literary training that, if wrong-doers are merely the creatures of organisation and circumstance, crime is inevitable, that criminals are irresponsible, and that punishment is useless. Those who take this view overlook the fact, that punishment itself is an item—and an important item—in the circumstance of criminals and the most potent changer of nerve-matter. Character in all men, and in all animals, is the product of forces within, and, in less degree, of forces outside the skull. Saints as well as sinners, magistrates as well as criminals, are equally the creatures of organisation and circumstance. The husband, it may be, cannot help killing his wife, but society cannot help hanging the husband, and criminal society cannot help being impressed by the hanging. The evolution of a people, as distinguished from its dissolution, depends, not on the spontaneous

efforts of the units, but on the increasing superiority of its nerve-organisation. The question of free will is nowhere discussed in these pages, but if, alas, we are merely puppets, yet most of us are tolerably good puppets. What is more, the good puppets, good in virtue of organisation, are constantly punishing or getting rid of the bad puppets who are bad in virtue of organisation. On such terms do good puppets exist and multiply.

The previous paragraph furnishes a conclusive reply to those who affirm that if the organisation-view of crime comes to be generally accepted, society would fall into a sensual mire, into pure animalism. But, in passing, why fall to sensual mire only? Why not to thieving mire? Why not to murdering mire? The first impulse of all living things is not the sexual impulse; this comes later; the first impulse is the preservation of life, and therefore the first result of a moral failure would be to seize, by theft or murder, the means to live. There seems to lurk in the theological mind a suspicion that, while a flesh-and-blood police can prevent theft and murder, the sexual instinct can only be kept in order by supernatural interference.

If men and women, on learning that they were not masters of their fate, were doomed to moral

collapse, magistrates and police would themselves share in the collapse; they, too, would become thieves and murderers first, and—all that were left of them—libertines afterwards. If we face the actual facts of life we shall find that criminals generally—murderers, thieves, and drunkards, as well as paupers and lunatics, are, with few exceptions, unhesitating believers in supernaturalism; we shall find that in the ages of the most unquestioning faith in supernaturalism 'sensual mire' reached its maximum of grossness; we shall find that, as an able Hibbert lecturer—Dr. Beard—remarks, in Geneva, under John Calvin's theocratic rule, morals were fouler than at any time before or since. If, by the way, the naturalist has so far travelled beyond the supernaturalist in morals that he refuses to burn his neighbour's grandmother for a witch, may he not be trusted with the honour of his neighbour's daughter? Naturalists too often fail to live up to their ethical standards but supernaturalists, from king David downwards, are not more fortunate.

The nerve theory tells us *not* that punishment is useless, but that the punishment of immorality is the one method by which morality originated; it tells us that it is only by punishment morality can be preserved and increased. Punishment is indeed the one whip by which evolution keeps

the moral world in order. The organisation theory tells us moreover that, in evolving peoples at any rate, there can be no descent into sensual mire. In one of his numberless illuminating phrases Mr. Spencer remarks, in effect, (though he would probably not approve of the use to which the formula is here put,) that all progress is made under the law that superiority reaps the rewards of superiority, and that inferiority suffers the penalties of inferiority. If this, in a nutshell, is the theory of evolution, are we not justified in concluding that the more effective the penalties of moral inferiority—the more rapid will be the diminution of crime?

Moral nerve, or brain, is of two kinds: one kind is genuine, enduring, and inherited; the other is merely substitutional, acquired, and temporary. True moral nerve gives out its own morality; substitutional nerve borrows its morality from others. At the very beginnings of life two factors in the evolution of morals are doubtless present; one is the individual's recognition of the fact that wrong-doing is displeasing to his (or its) fellows; the other that the disapproval of his (or its) fellows brings discomfort or even death. Intellectual nerve sees disapproval, and, through sensory nerve, realises the resulting penalties. Substitutional or artificial morality

has no natural repugnance to wrong-doing and no feeling of remorse after its commission; it simply recognises and fears punishment. Soon or late the two sorts of nerve give place to the one more enduring and inherited sort. In all human beings, probably, both nerve moralities are present. In the vast majority of persons true moral nerve leaves little room for the substitutional moral nerve; in the minority, it may be, that the substitutional nerve predominates; it is from this minority that evil-doers emerge. The individuals of this class are found in every grade of society, but much more frequently among the uneducated and among those who are incapable of education.

In the matter of punishment we may compendiously put all wrong-doers into two classes. In the first are all those who, whatever may be their relative proportions of genuine and of substitutional moral nerve, have yet sufficient intellectual nerve to understand the sort of conduct which the community punishes, and sufficient sensory, or skin, nerve to dread punishment. In the second class are those who have not only insufficient moral nerve, but also defective intellectual nerve; and these curiously enough have frequently imperfect sensory nerve also. The second class does not concern us here; for it,

enduring restraint seems to be the only rational treatment; for it, punishment by pain is useless and therefore cruel. Much of the hesitation and difficulty which arises in courts of law is explained by the fact that no clear line divides the two classes.

Fully understanding, then, that morality exists now solely because immorality has been punished in the past, and understanding also that immorality in the future will be secured on no other terms; seeing that the utmost we can do for the habitual evil-doer is to implant or restore substitutional moral nerve, the all-important question arises: On what principle should punishment be inflicted? In reply it may be said that all punishment should be so conducted as to secure a maximum of efficiency with a minimum of the coarser pains and discomforts. The coarser the criminal, however, the coarser must be the punishment.

Every man carries with him two cups—a special cup of happiness, and a special cup of unhappiness. If one cup, whichever it may be, is large the other is small. The variety in these is vast. The man of fine nerve is not easily made happy; he is easily made miserable. The man of coarse nerve is easily gladdened, and not easily cast down. Kings may be blessed but the evil

doer, under readily attainable circumstance, is glorious. Herein may be recognised the guiding principle of punishment. Into the misery cup of the wrongdoer should be poured the, to him, most pungent discomfort. To him confinement matters little, plain food little, the censure of the good nothing. The contempt of his comrades matters very much. But the one thing which he fears most of all is skin-discomfort—the discomfort of the lash or rod.

Although deliberate assassins, anarchist and others, who are mostly met with in the lower social strata of Southern and Celtic Europe, have characteristics peculiar to themselves, they have also a few common to all criminals: they furnish information of great value in penal legislation generally. The anarchist displays that scant regard for life—his own life and the lives of others—which characterises less advanced civilisations. His bodily conformation is poor; his intelligence is of a low type but is compatible with a singular cunning which he looks upon as sagacity, and with much volubility which he believes to be eloquence. He is restless, discontented, clamorous, intractable, fanatical. He is often supposed to be of a deeply passionate nature. It is true, that in the earlier stages of civilisation the intellect follows and helps on the

passions, whereas in the later stage the passions follow and help the intellect. The anarchist assassin, however, is more or less passionless in all the passions. His sexual impulse is markedly feeble. A man who has an overwhelming love for a woman or love for a child, is rarely if ever a deliberate scheming murderer of high-placed personages. What in him is regarded as a passion is simply mania—the confusion of mania and of rhetoric with passion being not uncommon. His mania is for notoriety. At the best, life has no great attraction for him. The keen enjoyment of life is a passion and he has no passions. He willingly flings his life away if only his name may be on every tongue for one day; and especially if he may be the supreme hero of his comrades for a brief period. It is a common remark of assassins—"Now my old comrades will hear of me." Not long ago a Spanish assassin's one complaint was, "Why don't the newspapers interview me?"

The fundamental remedies for destructive anarchism are, as I conceive them, two in number—humiliation of abnormal vanity and bodily pain. The chief value of skin-pain—from lash or rod—is that it involves humiliation to the high-flown and maniacally-vain criminal: the humiliation should be extreme; the pain very moderate. The chief humiliation of the assassin, if it were

practicable, would be the suppression of his name. But he may be made to cut a sorry figure in the eyes of his full-blown and budding anarchist comrades; be made to appear as a mischievous big baby. To effect this result why not put the lash into the hands of some sturdy woman—one of Princess Ida's "Daughters of the Plough"?

It is frequently objected by misguided philanthropists that bodily punishment degrades and demoralises its victims. The reply is conclusive; criminal organisation is already degraded; its degradation cannot well go deeper. In effect skin-pain, and the fear of skin-pain, strengthen substitutional morality—the only morality of which criminals are capable. The charge that punishment demoralises is indeed, as we have already seen, a charge against the entire evolutional process. We may scold evolution, but nevertheless punishment, and the fear of punishment, constitute the one method which has led to the moral adequacy now existing.

It is said, moreover, that the penal measures here advocated would merely drive crime under the surface. It is so said with much truth; but to drive murder and violence and theft under the surface, to drive them, in fact, to the interior of the criminal's skull, and keep them there, is a

splendid achievement; it is all we can hope for. The utmost we can do for the wrong-doer is to renovate or create substitutional nerve. Only sharp discomfort, and the fear of sharp discomfort, can accomplish this.

PART II.

THE ERROR

OF

LITERARY VERDICTS.

PART II.

Chapter I.

LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC VERDICTS.

"All manifestations of intellect and morals and feeling and action depend mainly on amounts and sorts and states of nerve-matter: so does all character, in persons or in peoples; so do all institutions, movements, laws, customs, creeds, codes. Any change in these is preceded by nerve change. In other words, all things appertaining to Human Nature are based on Human Organisation." (See page 1, Part I.) In what degree nerve states are due to the action and interaction of nerve and circumstance does not concern us here. But surely nerve states and nerve changes call for some attention on the part of historians and philosophers—few signs of such attention are visible.

In order to show that the judgment of men of purely literary training is of comparatively little value in the question of morals, it will not be without profit to look at their verdicts generally in other matters of grave interest which, like morals, have much to do with nerve-organisation.

For the purposes of these notes we may, compendiously, divide all mankind into two classes:

those who look at all things from a literary point of view, and those who look at them from a scientific standpoint. The points of view, and therefore the classes, differ widely. The chief characteristic of the literary class is that, probably for the most part unconsciously, it seeks first of all comfort—bodily and mental comfort. Comfort being secure, it does not object to the acquisition of such truths as are not incompatible with comfort. The leading note of the scientific class is that its first care is for truth, and next for such comfort as may be consistent with truth. The two impulses doubtless imply two worlds of thought and knowledge, but they imply much more than this; they imply two attitudes, two methods, two goals.

The literary spirit is as old as man himself—possibly a little older. The remote savage, whose literature was confined to a few grunts, to notched sticks, and knotted cords, had much in common with modern men of letters. The scientific spirit is a comparatively modern growth, and confined within a very limited area of our planet's surface.

The literary spirit has much to say for itself: its aims and ideals are rarely ignoble. It wishes to elevate, cheer, and beautify life. It instinctively puts goodness before truth—a characteristic

which, by the way, Coleridge recognised with surprise. It does this because goodness appeals to the emotions, and in early civilisations the emotions come before reason. It is in advanced civilisation only, when the scientific spirit has begun to stir, that the emotions are called upon to follow and support reason. The literary spirit, it should be added, has rarely been found in any past time, or in any clime, save in more or less close union with the arts of magic or with theological beliefs. The leading educators in the past have been either theologians or, in less degree, magicians, and their lineal descendants, the metaphysicians. It is strange, moreover, to find that, even now, advanced rationalists, if of purely literary training, look on physiological research and the physiological explanation of life's problems with instinctive dislike. Seeing that the literary class has embraced the whole human race in the past, and that the embrace is even now but slightly relaxed, it follows that, on all matters, the vast majority of verdicts are literary verdicts. It is not too much to say that those verdicts are more or less misleading—misleading even in those fields where the literary spirit claims to speak with most authority—fields religious, ethical, philosophical, social, and political. The scientific spirit has little to say

for itself that is inviting to the multitude—educated or uneducated. To dwellers in the kingdom of literary twilight, and to the select few who disport themselves in the kingdom of metaphysical moonlight, the entrance into the kingdom of scientific sunlight is a disconcerting change.

The characteristic feature of the scientific temper is its imperious desire to get at the reality and truth of things in the belief, not always conscious, that such desire is, in the long run, the vital spring of progress. The literary temper, it will be gathered from what has already been said, examines all things with a strict regard to some desirable end. All our hopes and fears, all our pursuits keep this end in view. The only calling or occupation which has the search for truth as its overt aim is the pursuit of science. It is, in the main, a modern pursuit.

The literary spirit, in short, asks: How can things be made good and pleasant to us? The scientific spirit asks: What are these things, and what do they mean?

How came the two tempers—the literary and the scientific—into existence? Both are, of course, the products of evolution. The literary temper arose at a time when fear—always the dominant emotion—was much more dominant

than it now is: fear, often well-founded fear, of the loss of known good; fear of the nearness of unknown evil. Broadly speaking, in remotest times, fear begat cunning, indirectness, tortuosity: these were the qualities needed for the preservation of life — without these life had been impossible. Gradually the cunning and tortuosity born of bodily needs, extended to all other human needs—to ethics, language, religion; in time they found their strongest expression in occultism, theology, and metaphysics.

Later and slowly, as experience brought some knowledge, especially knowledge of the uniformity, if not the beneficence, of Nature's methods, the feeling of fear grew gradually less, and, as a result, the need for cunning grew less also, and in time industry, literature, and the arts took fuller form.

It is contended in these pages that these changes resolve themselves into questions of nerve inheritance, nerve change, and nerve fitness.

It has already been remarked that the scientific position is an attitude. Throughout history scattered examples may be found of this attitude even among men and women whose training and environment were mainly literary — Lucretius, Omar Khayyám, Goethe, George Eliot to wit. With even greater frequency illustrations of the literary

attitude are found among those who are engaged in scientific pursuits. There may be much of scientific curiosity, of scientific ingenuity, of scientific industry where there is but little of the true scientific spirit. It would be ungracious to cite names. It is interesting to note that in Lucretius, Omar Khayyám, Goethe, and George Eliot scientific thought was associated with impassioned poetic feeling—a sufficient reply, by the way, to those who affirm that science must needs be cold and hard.

To the query: How comes it, seeing that if science is disconcerting and uncomfortable, that scientific nerve—scientific character—has come into existence? Answer may be made by another query: How come ascetics and martyrs into existence? In truth, and as popularly conceived, ascetics and martyrs are mere fictions—literary fictions. Ascetics and martyrs and scientists alike are produced by evolution; in certain grooves of circumstance evolution has found them fittest to be left alive. In the final choice of action every man does that which *to him* brings the greatest happiness. He who wears a hair shirt is happier than if he did not wear one. He who goes willingly to the stake would be less happy if he did not go. So the man who seeks and embraces truths would not be happy if he neglected or rejected them.

Voluntary misery is always happiness — the greatest happiness at least which the total forces of central nervous organisation and environment permit.

Chapter II.

TENNYSON AND LITERARY VERDICTS.

In passing now to examples of strange literary verdicts, we find some of the strangest have been delivered by the few poets who so nobly represent our highest form of literature. Tennyson speaks for the majority of men and women, educated or uneducated, when he affirms that science must be taught her place: "she is the second, not the first"; that when "cut from love and faith" she is "some wild Pallas, from the brain of demons." "She cannot fight the fear of death." But, may it not be said, she has a higher purpose—the highest purpose—to teach the fear of falsehood. If our intelligence is merely the action of "cunning casts in clay," Tennyson will have nothing to do with it. If over the vast domain of naturalism there did not hang a canopy of supernaturalism, he would, indeed, put an end to his existence.

Pausing for a moment, may we not ask why, if mere clay wrote "Hamlet" and "In Memoriam," we should be angry with clay? To call

brain clay is legitimate enough in poetry, but it is equally legitimate to call the odour of the rose clay, or the song of the nightingale clay, or the splendour of the setting sun.

The same literary spirit breathes in his well known line, "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers." The dislike of science, that is of knowledge, has been emphatically expressed by many commanding figures in the world of letters.

To Wordsworth the scientific inquirer is 'a fingering slave who peeps and botanises on his mother's grave.' Coleridge, with more sobriety, thought it possible that Newton might be a great man, but it would take 'ten Newtons to make one Milton.' Emerson, a conspicuous embodiment of the literary spirit, affirmed that the student who puts things into a bottle ends by putting himself also into a bottle. Dr. Arnold declared that he would rather a son of his should imagine that the sun went round the earth than that he should be insensible to moral beauty. Dr. Arnold, by the way, should have known that ignorance of the sun's relation to the earth is a special characteristic of those who are most deficient in the moral sense. He might have learnt, too, that criminals frequently leave on the walls of their cells beautiful moral sentiments;

in art, too, it might be added, they sometimes leave meritorious drawings and pretty verses: *they never leave a drawing or an observation of a scientific character.*

It is remarkable that the antagonism which exists between letters and science—happily a passing episode in civilisation—should be on the side of letters only. If, leaving literary arm-chairs, we examine living specimens of science-students, we shall find that they, as keenly as others, delight in the creations of Shakespeare, and Burns, and Wordsworth, and Tennyson.

If we were compelled to choose between two worlds—one a world of poems, say, The Iliad, The Divine Comedy, Faust, Paradise Lost, Tam o'Shanter, In Memoriam—and another world, a world of telescopes, and crucibles, and geological spades, and dissecting knives—our fate would indeed be hard. Probably many devotees of science—I for one—would choose the world of poetry—at least of poetry in its noblest forms. But indeed the question is absurd and fatuous. Wordsworth said he was content to enjoy, and not to understand. But why may we not enjoy with Wordsworth, and understand with Darwin? Our highest poetry—the product of the two or three select masses of poetic nerve (the poetic geniuses) which appear in the course of a century

—is perhaps the noblest of human creations. Such poetry stands alone. As Goethe said, it is not an art, it is genius — the product of genius we should call it. It is not an art, yet it has certain art elements in its composition, for it appeals to the emotional nerve, as do all the arts. But—and this differentiates it from the arts in general—it appeals to the highest intellectual nerve also. It is because it contains emotional elements that poetry cannot be completely defined; the feelings would cease to be feelings if they could be expressed in terms of intellect. But this we may say, the loftiest poetry puts into musical or emotional speech all the elements of life and of nature—thought, knowledge, morality, the passions, conduct, action. Science, on the other hand, analyses life; it separates, puts together, clarifies, methodises, formulates. Science is the totality of life given over to the analyst. Poetry is the totality of life given over to the singer. Why, may we not ask, if the scientist extends the length and breadth of life, should not the poet reap the fruits of his labour, and set more of the length and breadth of life to song?

It is, to digress for a moment, the combination of exceptional intellectual nerve, exceptional emotional nerve, and exceptional musical nerve

that go to the making of our greatest poets: but these lofty forms of nerve are never found in equal degrees. In Shakespeare, and Burns, and Tennyson, intellect, feeling, and music were present in colossal degree, but in Shakespeare intellectual nerve was predominant, in Burns passional nerve, in Tennyson musical nerve. These geniuses had massive brains, without which they could not have had the three massive elements which go to the making of poetic genius.

Beyond all question 'Love and Faith'—faith as trust—are the noblest elements in human nature. They are not the less beautiful because they are found in all animal life. The rattlesnake has (unconsciously, perhaps, as with early and many later men) love and faith—love of its own kind, and faith in an order beneficent to rattlesnakes. Evolution, however, has so left matters that there can be no science apart from love and faith—although there can be an abundance of love and faith without science. Love and faith were present for countless ages before science appeared: their fruits prior to the advent of science were not altogether admirable. Men, in the past—and not a remote past—have done their cruellest deeds because they had inordinate love and faith—faith as belief,

perhaps, rather than faith as trust. The Inquisitors of Spain and the witch-burners of England flourished in an atmosphere of love and faith: they could not have lived in an atmosphere composed of the three elements—love and faith and science.

In Tennyson's oft-quoted line 'Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers' there lurks not a little misconception. It is true there are many persons who possess much knowledge and but little wisdom; with industry and a good memory there may be but little judgment. But it is equally true that there are also many individuals who have not a little wisdom—so far as wisdom can be found in the union of capability and insight and love of justice *apart from knowledge*. Such wise men have been at the root of much of the calamity of the world. Had the Higher — that is the scientific or truth-seeking — Criticism of our time existed in Tudor times the wise Sir Thomas More would not have presided over the racking of heretics. May we not say, with some little truth, 'Wisdom comes, but knowledge lingers'?

Chapter III.

THE GENESIS OF MODERN KINDLINESS.

Much cruelty in men is doubtless inherited from the lower forms of animal life which preceded them during countless æons. It is interesting, however, to note that the ape tribe (our distant cousins—not our ancestors) is not generally cruel —not so cruel indeed as early men. What is not only interesting, but tragic also, is the fact that partially civilised man—of the prescientific civilisation—reached a cruelty in conception and action which no animal communities have ever come near. No approach to Duke Alva as heretic destroyer, or to Cotton Mather as witch burner, was possible in lives devoid of supernatural ideas.

If we inherit some cruel instincts from our remote ancestors, we inherit kindly instincts in even greater degree. For, not the comparatively mild ape world only, but all living things exist in virtue of a nerve-organisation which desires and seeks the well-being of other living things. For if in all living things the sense of kindness did not exceed the sense of unkindness no life would be possible.

If we consider well the ideals demanded by

supernatural beliefs, and consider too the commands supposed to be divinely inspired commands, it is not difficult to see how they inevitably led to manifold cruelties. In the ages of Faith men's souls must be saved—saved by those who claimed to know all about souls and salvation—saved at whatever cost to their bodies. So far as circumstance can debase nerve-matter—and it can be either much debased or much improved by circumstance—mediæval circumstance unquestionably tended to lower its character. The intellectual energy of a prolonged epoch was wholly absorbed in depicting the terrors of hell. Mr. Lecky's writings, and the authorities he cites, in his historic treatment of Morals and of Rationalism leave no doubt on this point. Saved and happy (?) parents were ceaselessly invited to listen to the marrow boiling in the bones of unsaved children, and to witness the fact that their children's eyeballs had been turned into red-hot cinders.

If we turn from the consideration of cruelty in all its forms to the genesis of modern kindliness we discover that it is due to the slow change effected in human nerve as shown by the growth of the modern scientific spirit. It is not, then, by mere coincidence that the decay of supernaturalism has been attended by the growth of

kindliness. Theology, with much of literature, calls for unhesitating belief and conclusive action—and is therefore merciless. In all fields of enquiry science calls for hesitation and suspense of judgment—and is, therefore, merciful. Supernatural revelations embitter, divide, and foster persecution: natural or scientific revelations soften, unite, tolerate.

Turning now to the Fine Arts, we find that they also have done but little to advance the well-being of societies in their noblest feature—Kindliness. The pursuit and contemplation of mere beauty fail to give either kindliness or persistence to civilisation. Had science, as we understand it, played any part in the civilisation of Greece and Rome and Florence, their histories would have been other than they were. We may with profit recall some aspects of our own civilisation in past times. For many centuries men were skilled in the arts; they sang, and painted, and carved, and built cathedrals; for many centuries men were devout, they prayed, and fasted, and wept, and worshipped — but they remained cruel: then Science came and opened their eyes, and they saw that the chief evil of the past had been Cruelty, and that the brightest promise of the future was Kindliness.

Chapter IV.

STUART MILL.

In further considering some remarkable judgments given by men of purely literary training, only such names will be cited as are held—and justly held in high esteem. These judgments delivered on the graver question of life and history represent a large body of opinion. Mill and Tennyson stood as far apart from each other as they well could. Mill was in no sense a popular figure, but, whatever his views were, not the nineteenth nor any other century presents a nobler character; not one more eager to bring in the reign of truth and justice and kindliness. It was Mill's misfortune that he did his work before the significance of the evolutional principle was clearly recognised: it was his failing—a failing entirely due to his purely literary training—that he ignored the teachings of physiology. He held no beliefs which transcended the domain of naturalism. Yet the brain, he affirmed, had little to do with the various manifestations of life and

character; mind itself was at first a sort of blank sheet at the mercy of whatever circumstance chanced to write upon it. He could not see that if human brain alone so responds to circumstance as to yield human intelligence it cannot be a neutral mass. Of course, he was unable to see that different brains necessarily respond differently to circumstance and so give out different sorts of human life.

With amazing inconsistency, in so clear a thinker, Mill wholly surrenders his position when, in his Autobiography, he refers to some other persons as possessing certain 'natural gifts' which he did not possess. He clearly implies that the 'gifts' were 'natural,' and presumably congenital; they were not acquired and could not be imparted. If 'natural gifts' however are not properties, innate in brain, what are they, and where are they?

Mill shared the opinion, held by most men of letters, that the character of persons and peoples may be greatly and suddenly changed by sufficiently weighty circumstance. When the revolution of 1830 broke out he hastened to Paris to confer with congenial spirits touching the immediate bringing about of the Golden Age in France. At one time he believed that the adoption of Hare's Parliamentary system at home would

revolutionise society at once. At another he confessed, with bitter disappointment, that household suffrage had failed to produce the results he so confidently predicted. In this ignoring of the structure and properties of nerve one is reminded of John Bright—a name dear to all Englishmen —who expressed surprise that the ballot had not brought about a sort of Millenium. Francis Bacon was equally blind to physiological possibilities, and impossibilities, when he affirmed that no person, no matter what his brain power might be, could fail to reach true conclusions in the process of reasoning, if only he acted on the rules laid down by Francis Bacon.

It is of interest to physiologists to note that Mill admitted that his school—the utilitarian school—was open to the charge of being cold and mechanical. He—the most illustrious opponent of physiological interpretations — was indeed stigmatised, not too urbanely, as worshiping "a dead cast-iron devil." But, alas, in Carlyle's nervous organisation there was a sad lack of urbane cells.

Heredity and Circumstance.

It is a widely-accepted literary verdict that in the formation of character circumstance is more potent than heredity. Character—that is the

sum of the intelligent life of man—is the outcome of living brain or nerve. What the brain is or is not, that character is or is not. *It is brain, not character, which is inherited*: character is hidden within the brain and grows only as the brain grows, although circumstance has doubtless very much to do with its growth and action.

The student of evolution has no alternative in deciding which of the two forces in question is the predominant force. The factors of evolution are, briefly, four in number: inheritance, variation, excessive multiplication, and natural selection of the fittest with immense destruction of the least fit. Of these factors heredity is beyond all doubt the dominant factor. If the products—brain and character are among them—of a million years of evolutional methods could be changed by the normal circumstances of a few decades we should have not evolution but chaos.

The characters of children, of adults, of senile persons, of idiots, of average men, of geniuses, differ from each other simply because, in each case, there is a distinct difference of brain. The fruits of genius cannot be gathered from average brain. The products of average brain cannot be extracted from an idiot's brain.

The conclusion just put forward is confirmed by the observations of daily life. Suffice it to

say that of two daughters, brought up under precisely similar circumstances, one takes to literature and indoor life; the other hunts, shoots and lives in the open air; they inherit two different sorts of brains from two different parental lines. Of two sons, brought up exactly alike, one takes to science and meditation—the other to the platform or public affairs: the explanation lies hidden in the brains of two sets of ancestors.

The popular view on the greater influence of circumstances is explained by the fact that neutral, or not strongly marked brain, is very amenable to circumstances within certain limits. It has been shown in previous chapters that moral brain is more plastic to surrounding influences than intellectual brain.

It is said that the promoters of those admirable institutions, 'Homes' for the rescue of neglected children, scout the idea of heredity. Now, all the children are for a long period subjected to one and the same groove of circumstances, yet in recent years it has been found necessary to announce that those sent to Canada are "carefully selected." "Careful selection" would seem to imply that organisation means more and circumstances less than the promoters are willing to admit.

In discussing the question how far weak and

neutral nerve is capable of moral improvement it must be remembered that circumstance may be abnormally bad or abnormally good—violently good or violently bad. A well-inherited young brain if kept persistently in a thieves' den will certainly change for the worse. A poorly inherited brain put into a "Home" will probably change for the better. But even violently good circumstance cannot make stupid nerve clever, or taciturn nerve voluble, or cowardly nerve brave. Neither must it be forgotten that society is built up by normal methods acting on normal nerve. If the majority of brains were physically spoiled by violent circumstance—alcohol or opium or sun-stroke—society would quickly come to an end.

If circumstance is all important, and brain of little or no importance, prolonged change of even normal circumstance ought to effect radical change in character. Such change is rarely if ever met with. Change in *conduct* is not necessarily change in *character*, and character is the more important of the two. Feeble character is consistent with unobjectionable conduct, and a fine character may, as George Eliot taught, have grave failings. Matthew Arnold's famous dictum that 'conduct is three-fourths of life' lacked subtlety and depth.

The literary treatment of heredity in history and biography is not a little remarkable. The subject is frequently ignored altogether. The parentage of the male ancestors of a given individual is sometimes traced back for a few generations; it is rare to find any reference to the mothers. But in current life, and of course in the past also, only half the boys and girls who come into the world take the father or the father's line, the other half—boys and girls—take after the mother or her family ancestors. Moreover, it is rare for the males or the females in families to transmit their characteristic features for more than two or three generations. In large families it is usual to find some of the children—boys or girls—taking after the father and some after the mother. This is so in all classes and communities; it is so with the highly gifted and the least gifted alike. To trace back the character of a notable person through numerous male ancestors is absurd, because in a very few generations the mother steps in and gives her character mentally and bodily to the sons, it may be for two or three generations; after which the fathers' turn may come again.

It is a favourite device of novelists (and I am not of those who deplore the 'rage for fiction:' finely endowed and well equipped writers of

fiction give a truer knowledge of men and women, and also of localities and movements and epochs than second rate historians and biographers.) It is, I repeat, a favourite device of novelists to trace, in family picture galleries, a family nose or a family upper lip, back to a remote period. The noses and the lips exist only in the imagination of the writer.

An amusing example of literary methods in history is seen in the fact that the majority of our historians who treat of the sixteenth century describe all its Kings and Queens as displaying the Tudor spirit or animated by the Tudor blood. In truth Harry Tudor—Henry VII.—was the only one of Tudor blood, and he is never spoken of as displaying the Tudor spirit. Henry VIII. and his daughter Elizabeth had certainly several peculiarities in common, but neither of them had anything of Harry Tudor in their composition. Henry VIII. took after his *mother*, who was a Warwick, and a true daughter of her father, Edward IV. Henry and his grandfather Edward had much in common; both were large in frame, striking in contour, rose pink in complexion, and both were therefore held to be ideals of manly perfections; both were affable, busy, vain, ostentatious, and extravagant; both put self in the foremost place; both were capricious and cruel. The

unfortunate Queen Mary was slight and dark, as was her Spanish mother, Catherine of Aragon. Here we see that the *mother* determines the greater share of the history of the 16th century, and yet historians take no notice of mothers. Having given one illustration of the treatment and the part played by physiological force in history, I pass to a single example of biographic methods. In the life of a recent Archbishop—written by a very capable son—the writer is greatly perplexed because he can find no explanation of certain peculiar features in his father's character in the characters of his father's male forerunners. Incredible as it may seem, the Archbishop—as I have good reason to know—was the image of his mother, who was an extremely capable woman and a considerable force in her family and her circle.

Chapter V.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Thomas Carlyle's brain was doubtless one of the most vigorous, and certainly the most vehement, of his century. The judgments he pronounced deserve close attention in two aspects—their method and their import. All expressions of intelligence derive their characteristics from the characteristics of the expressing nerve. No nerve-deliverance has ever been given on any open question which would not have been a different deliverance if the delivering nerve had been other than it was in weight, or form, or sort, or state. No word has ever been spoken, on open topics, which would not have been a different word if the speaker's brain had weighed one-half ounce less or one-half ounce more.

Carlyle's verdicts are telling examples of the self-confidence of those men of letters who belong rather to the active and unresting temperament than to the pensive, and it may be indolent, temperament: the two temperaments themselves

are characteristic properties of two sorts of nerve. He insists on our doing this or that at once; we are to say this *is* so—not that it *may* be so; we are to believe, and not to believe that we believe; if we put suspense in place of conviction, we are lost creatures.

The chief characteristic of active, as distinguished from reflective nerve, is as I have attempted elsewhere to show, that it tends to habitual disapproval. Everything which is near in time or space is going to the dogs. Carlyle was in fact a scold by nerve-organisation, though a scold on a magnificent scale. Scolding is interesting and commands attention. Had Carlyle praised everything with his characteristic vehemence he would never have been heard of.

Carlyle's name will always be associated with the question of *Heroes and Hero worship*. The hero "is heaven-born"; "the light of inspiration is in him"; his is the only worth in the world; he only is to be revered; the chief duty of the multitude is to discover, look up to, and obey him. The biography of heroes is the only history of any value—a literary verdict, indeed, which in a modified degree exercises a spell over many who are not among Carlyle's express followers. His verdicts indeed in general are made up of half-truths, and are in more or

less opposition to the teaching of nerve-physiology as I understand it: they are, moreover, unsupported by history and biography alike.

Before further comment it is well to divide Carlyle's heroes—all heroes in fact—into two broad classes: the leaders of movements or epochs on the one hand, and the creative geniuses on the other hand. Luther is an example of the first class, Shakespeare of the second. Both are among Carlyle's heroes. Strictly speaking, that is physiologically speaking, leaders of a movement are simply its advanced guard—its active, fighting, and most capable men. Between the born leaders and the humblest of the no less born followers there is doubtless a wide range in capability and force, simply because of the wide range there is in the quantity and quality of nerve-matter. Such heroes are in reality not out of touch with their fellow men; they do not need to be discovered—they discover themselves. When in any movement the average nerve masses of the multitude are not ready, when there is no intermediate gradational nerve, the exceptional nerve mass is powerless. Not even a Wyclif could prematurely expedite the birth of a slowly maturing reformation; simply because he could not unduly expedite the growth of reforming

nerve. Great movements may indeed mature without heroes. When our national nerve *was* ready for the Reformation the people marched very well although they had no captains to speak of. The time was heroic although it had no 'heaven-born' heroes.

With the hero as creative genius, who is more frequently the embodiment of reflective nerve, it is somewhat different, but here also the chasm between the hero and the multitude is not unbridged. Luther well represents the hero as leader. He contributed nothing new in knowledge or thought or argument to the Reformation. He simply took one side and fought. Inevitably, as a result, the other side was taken also, and fighting alike by words and tears and blood followed in abundant measure. Shakespeare perhaps will always be the chief illustration of the hero as thinker and creator. His brain was marvellously though not miraculously exceptional. It was exceptional in its huge quantity as well as in its fine quality, and was doubtless inherited from many generations of the cultured and capable Arden line of ancestors—his mother's line. Heroes will be better understood when biographers and historians and men of letters generally come to see that heroes come as frequently from their mother's family as from their

father's. We must not forget moreover that Shakespeare's genius excelled in borrowing from others all that could help him; so that we are almost entitled to say that, just as the Bible was a growth, and the Iliad a growth, so the Shakespearean output was in no slight degree a growth also.

The topic should not be left without one more word on Shakespeare's brain. Perhaps no portrait in existence reveals to us a healthy head as large above the eyes and ears as Shakespeare's, and therefore, we are not surprised that he did what he did. Considering his brain, and his antecedents, and his encompassing circumstance, he ought to have done it. With more favourable antecedents and circumstance he might have done even better than he did: his brain was so large that probably many portions of it were never brought into use. Probably no large brain is ever so encircled by favourable circumstance that all its cells are brought into action. I cannot but think that, when environment and education have made material advances, the brain will be in readiness to yield a richer and a fuller life.

Carlyle's verdicts on Luther and the Reformation are remarkable; but indeed so many remarkable verdicts have been delivered on that

great movement that they call for a few words of further and more express notice.

The Reformation.

Thomas Carlyle declared that modern civilisation dates from the famous scene at Worms when Luther appeared before the papal tribunal presided over by the Emperor Charles. The incident was certainly one of the most noteworthy and dramatic in history. But great movements do not begin in noteworthy or dramatic incidents, and of no movement can it be said that a man can point his finger to the hour or the day either of its birth or of its death. Fundamental nerve changes are always slow and gradual, and hence the accompanying life's changes, both in communities and individuals, are slow and gradual also. Strictly speaking indeed, it was not so much that the incident at Worms produced civilisation as that civilisation produced the scene at Worms. It was the Reformation which gave us Luther not Luther who gave us the Reformation. Reuchlin, a brilliant scholar, appeared before Erasmus, and Wessels, a notable fighter for reforms, preceded Luther. Tetzel methods had long been as distasteful to Romanists, the Emperor included, as they were to Luther and his followers. Men of letters generally are prone

to attribute too much influence to conspicuous individuals and too little to average men who go to the making of intellectual and emotional atmospheres. Froude, for example, remarks that, had Latimer never lived the course of the Church of England would have been different. Froude's 'literary verdict' is not in accord with the facts of nerve-organisation. Churches, and states, and movements are not shuttlecocks to be tossed to and fro by single individuals however mighty they may be.

The Reformation teaches an important lesson in the physiology of nations: it revealed an onward step in the improvement of the nerve of the evolving peoples of Europe. It naturally followed the slow waning of credulous nerve and the slow growth of reasoning nerve. Catholicism and Protestantism were, in a sense, mere accidents. Our fathers had no special dislike for the one and no special liking for the other. It was simply that later and better nerve rejected what was most incredible, and defied what was most arrogant, in earlier and inferior nerve. In the reforming peoples evolution is still going on. Our fathers outgrew the Catholic garments; we are outgrowing the garments of Protestantism. Cardinal Newman said with truth that in the long run the journey *from* Catholicism is inevitably towards

Rationalism. On the finger-posts which indicate the route are inscribed the words Catholicism, Protestantism, Agnosticism. The march is not confined to the religious pathway; it goes on in all pathways—moral, social, political, scientific, and others.

Chapter VI.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Among the most astounding of purely literary verdicts are those that have been delivered on the French Revolution. It is commonly assumed that our Puritan Revolution and the French Revolution had much in common. We had *our* convulsion, it is customary to say, in the seventeenth century, and our neighbours had *theirs* in the eighteenth. Carlyle, in his "Heroes and Hero Worship," carries this view to its greatest extreme: Luther brought about the Reformation; the Reformation led to the Puritan revolt, and much else—to English Parliaments, American civilisation, German literature, and above all, to the French Revolution. All this is at variance with the teachings of bodily organisation as I understand them. Neither the national characteristics of the two peoples, nor the antecedent and encompassing circumstance, nor the motives, methods, aims, and deeds of the Puritan Revolution on the one hand, and the French Revolution on the other,

were at all similar. A King, it is true, was decapitated in both cases, but Monarchs have been killed under various circumstances and conditions, Mary Stuart to wit, and King Humbert. Mary's execution had as much to do with Humbert's assassination as the English King's death in the seventeenth century had to do with the French King's death in the eighteenth. The vital difference between the two is this: one was a grave Teutonic Puritan movement, involving all that English Puritanism means; the other was in effect an anarchic, celtic, movement expressing the anarchic element of a section of the French people. The Puritans, narrow, austere, and intolerant of all other religions save their own, were nevertheless serious, calm, thoughtful, and unquestionably human. The Parisian anarchist—as we should now call him—lavish in words and blood, was scarcely human. The French Revolution may in truth be described in few words: it was the work of a succession of committees composed of windbags, fanatics, and instinctive assassins—committees of blood and rhetoric gathered together from the lowest social strata. All history shows that extravagant rhetoric and murder, in certain peoples and temperaments, are twin sisters.

The Puritan revolution had the full sympathy of Bunyan and Milton. The Ravachols, Luchenis,

and Brescis would have been quite at home in the French catastrophe. The actors in the two great world-plays were alike in nothing save that, as Shylock might have said, they would have laughed had they been tickled; they would have bled had they been cut; they would have died had they been poisoned. It is but just to add that a few writers—Taine in France, and, if more reservedly, Döllinger and a few of the more philosophic historians in Germany, impelled by something of the scientific impulse, believe the French Revolution to have been simply the successful uprising of the Celtic scoundrelism of Paris. It cannot be said that the Puritan revolt was the work of the Teutonic dregs of London.

Chapter VII.

EPOCH-MAKING INCIDENTS AND PERSONS.

It is a common custom among persons of literary training to look on certain men, certain incidents, and certain battles as having a more or less epochal character. The custom has produced a large crop of literary verdicts. Epochs are merely the more conspicuous features of long chains of causes and effects. Historical currents are the products of "the long result of time." The more deeply historical research goes, the more clearly it is seen that there would have been a Reformation of religion without Luther, a Counter Reformation without Loyola, a wide-spread belief in predestination without Calvin, and later, a revival of evangelical religion without Wesley. Luther, Loyola, Calvin, Wesley and others, were results in greater degree than they were causes: they were results of the views and feelings of a given party—be that party small or large. For, doubtless, in all movements religious

or otherwise there is a wide difference in capability and force between the foremost leader and the humblest follower because between the two there is a wide difference in nerve-organisation. We admire the founders of the great religions; but the religions were always in the atmosphere before they were formally founded. 'Atmospheres' themselves have always small and imperceptible beginnings —and endings. Religions take on their palpable forms, beliefs, and methods in those times of unusual religious excitement which characterise early civilisations. He who most opportunely expresses the more dominant thought and feeling of the time, comes naturally to the front and receives the submission and adoration of his companions and followers. Gibbon—to give one example—records that it was only after severe competition with other leaders and other views that Mahomet gained his supremacy. His views, doubtless, survived, as other religious views have survived, because they were the fittest to a certain people, at a certain time, and under certain circumstances.

Those who, animated by the literary spirit, believe in epochal men, epochal incidents, epochal battles, point to the Great Charter as the bulwark of English liberty, and the Act of Settlement as

the safeguard of English Protestantism. The dominance of nerve-force seems to me to teach a different lesson. The passion for political and religious liberty inherent in Anglo-Saxon nerve in the one case led to Magna Charta (needless to say, the Normans were a Teutonic people) and in the other to the Act of Settlement. The famous documents were nothing more than the manifestations—not the causes—of resolute and self-reliant nerve. It is often said, by the way, that the Puritan spirit which undoubtedly did much for English freedom gave us not only religious liberty—such as it was in Puritan hands—but political liberty also. This is, indeed, a truly literary verdict. The nerve which demands to be free in religion is nerve which demands freedom in political and social life also. The converse is equally true: nerve which is wholly submissive in religion is never self-reliant in politics. The impulse towards liberty was for a long period an unconscious impulse, just as men were moral long before they knew that they were moral. It is curious, but not surprising, to note that the Puritans were not fully aware that they were fighting, even indirectly, for liberty as a principle. Their desire was much more to impose their own convictions on others than to teach others

to think for themselves. In like manner Luther, who appears to the multitude to be the one man who took the first great step in Rationalism, was quite unconscious of the fact, indeed was himself a bitter denouncer of reason. "Reason," he said, "was a beast," and "the strangling of reason was the most acceptable sacrifice to God." Curiously enough Luther, like our own Newman and Balfour, denounced reason by means of reason.

So with what are called decisive battles it is often said *in entire forgetfulness of the nerve characteristics of great peoples*, that Marathon saved Europe from Persian rule, and that Charles Martel at Tours delivered Europe from the domination of Mahomet. Marathon and Tours were effects and signs in a greater degree than they were causes.

In further considering the question how different sorts of nerve give different characters to similar ideas and principles we may with profit turn once more to the period of the Reformation. The first thing which strikes the student is that while one sort of nerve accepted the Reformation, another sort rejected it altogether. Saxon nerve accepted it; Celtic nerve rejected it. The various Teutonic nationalities—not being quite alike in nerve organisation—worked out the

Reform idea in different ways. The Germans effected their reform with much subtlety, hair-splitting, and fierce controversy. The English adopted it with marked moderation. The Scotch Lowlanders resolutely and uniformly carried Reform ideas to their fullest extent. Notwithstanding that all Teutonic nerve groups have certain characteristics in common, all this arose from the fact that German nerve was of one sort, English nerve of another sort, and Scotch nerve of still another sort—not forgetting that German circumstance, English circumstance, and Lowland circumstance were also of different sorts.

The fact that different varieties of nerve lead to differences in the expression of ideas and principles is clearly seen in the political world—in all the worlds in fact of nerve-action. One example must suffice. John Locke, as is well known, laid down certain abstract propositions touching methods of government: this country gradually embodied those propositions in sober if not humdrum legislation. But, re-stated by Rousseau and Voltaire, they drove the fervid celtic nerve of France into phrensied extremes.

Chapter VIII.

THE SLOW CHANGE IN THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLES AND INDIVIDUALS.

The history of religion in England throws a bright light on English nerve. In whatever direction that nerve marches, morally, religiously, politically, socially, or otherwise, it marches with slowness, patience, and persistence. It will neither be hurried nor hindered in any material degree. It has one characteristic which stands out before all others: a vein of rationalism runs through it—rationalism always meaning that, in intellectual fields, the intellect precedes the emotion. Asiatic peoples, despite the high level of civilisation which some of them have reached, have always been dominated by feeling rather than reason. All the great religions arose in Asia. In some European peoples too and in not a few English persons, the emotions are prone to dominate.

Our religious progress may be roughly divided into four stages, which merge into each other in smooth uneventful fashion. In the first stage

we were easy-going placid pagans; in the second we were easy-going placid Catholics; a placid easy-going Protestantism marked our third stage; and now we are slowly but assuredly entering the fourth stage of easy-going and placid Agnosticism. But while our nerve has always been easy-going and placid—it has at the same time been particularly self-reliant. As pagan nerve it never submitted to a despotic and excommunicating priesthood as did the Celts in their Druidical systems. As Catholics our fathers paid no settled heed to Papal claims. As Protestants they submitted to no rough-shod Puritan methods. As Agnostics they are not in the mood to be dragooned by militant iconoclasts. Strangely enough, though character and morals have steadily improved, they have been little if at all affected by the various religious changes.

Men of purely literary training, writers and readers, not infrequently imagine that the English people (English nerve) have undergone somewhat sudden changes in religious views and methods: one day the people, they seem to imagine, were Catholics, and another day the same people were Protestants; the Puritans of one decade became the Anglicans of the next; the ascetics of one reign, it is suggested rather

than openly affirmed, became debauchees in another. But deep and serious nerve changes, religious, or political, or other, are always slow because fundamental nerve changes are slow. Writers have confused the views and methods of mere *sections* of a people with the views and methods of peoples themselves. Even such sections do not change, or change but slightly. The Catholic section remains Catholic; the Puritan section remains Puritan. Minor sections, possessing perhaps extreme characteristics, come, now one, now another, to the front. Such a section, composed possibly of zealous and often able men who know what they want and mean to get it, may at times seem to have a magnitude and a potency which it does not in reality possess. English nerve may in truth be likened to a broad and placid stream, but a stream has its eddies, its divergent spurts and its collateral streamlets,—and of these are the sections.

No doubt the main mass is sometimes affected by a *section*—especially a vigorous section—either in the way of attraction or, perhaps more frequently, of repulsion. The Edwardian or Somerset Protestant section drove the mass nearer to Catholicism; the Marian section drove it as strongly in the direction of Protestantism; Puritanism, the strongest of the sections, drove the sober mass,

in the course of time, to such anti-puritan steps as the Five Mile Act, the Conventicle and other Acts. As the Marian section forced on easy-going and sober men the belief that henceforth no Catholicism was possible to the English people —to English nerve, so the Puritan movement imprinted on national nerve the deep conviction that Puritan dominance was for evermore an intolerable burden.

It would be easy to cite numerous illustrations of the error into which historians, novelists, and others have fallen in mistaking the beliefs and conduct of mere groups or sections of a people for the beliefs and conduct of peoples themselves. One illustration drawn from Roman history must suffice. It is a common practice among men of literary and theological bent to point to the foul morals of Roman society in certain centuries as the fruit of Pagan influences. Modern science — modern love of truth — carried into literary criticism has done much to dispel this and other literary illusions. Professor Dill, in his "Roman society in the last century of the Western Empire," one of the most important works which appeared in the closing years of the nineteenth century, may be appealed to as giving very material help in the great task of purifying the stream of historical

verdicts. Current pictures of Roman society are based chiefly on the diatribes of satirists. Satire was the special gift of Roman nerve, and Juvenal carried Roman satire to its highest point. In a noteworthy chapter entitled "The Indictment of Heathen and Christian Moralists," Mr. Dill asks: What sort of a picture of the morals of the late Victorian period might be drawn if it were based on the scandals hinted at in society journals and on the revelation of our police and divorce courts? "If society at large," he remarks, "had been half as corrupt as it is represented by Juvenal it must have speedily perished of mere rottenness." Dill, of course, makes no mention of 'nerve' and the slowness of nerve change, but his scientific instinct serves him well when he goes on to say: "When Juvenal died the Roman world was entering on a period of almost unexampled peace and prosperity, a period of upright and beneficent administration and of high public virtues, culminating in the reign of the saintly Marcus Aurelius." Dill may well ask, indirectly, if the sons and grandsons of a nation of miscreants suddenly became a nation of upright and capable citizens? Juvenal, in fact, painted —and painted in exaggerated colours—a minor section of society, and ignored the sobriety, self-restraint, and high morality of Roman society

in general. Gibbon also, I may add, points to the century in question as the one period of conscientious and cultivated life which has not yet been equalled in the world's history.

A question of deep physiological interest may be briefly touched upon here. Why did the Roman Empire become decadent? The question has been asked a thousand times, and a thousand different answers have been given. It is, it seems to me, a question of physiology. The once vigorous and adequate Roman nerve *seemed* to become feeble and inadequate. It was not, however, I imagine, that genuine Roman nerve changed, but rather that true Roman nerve disappeared and another and inferior sort of nerve, from outside sources, took its place. Was it not that the original Roman nerve was wholly used up in the frontier wars? Did not Rome, in fact, fall because there were no Romans left? The English empire, by the way, it is comforting to know, runs no risk of decadence so long as Englishmen continue to increase and multiply. When, in the possibly near future, a body of historians arise having some regard for physiology, especially the physiology of the nervous apparatus, these matters will take on a deeper significance, and receive a fuller light.

Chapter IX.

EMERSON ON NAPOLEON.

I have designedly selected the three great writers Mill, Carlyle and Emerson, for physiological comment because they well illustrate the wide range which different nerve-organisations may give to literary judgments. Those who believe that circumstance is everything and nerve nothing, or next to nothing, must surely be perplexed in contemplating the three illustrious figures. No surroundings could have converted Mill into a fiery prophet, or Carlyle into a tranquil reasoner; none could have kept Emerson from wandering into cloudland. Emerson shows us how remarkable may be the verdict of the literary spirit in its extremest form. The examples given here exhibit clearly the results which are liable to follow unscientific, unphysiological, methods of treating great questions.

There is, of course, room for much difference of opinion among both writers and students of science

on many matters both literary and scientific. When, for example, Emerson affirms that Napoleon was a 'radical'—nay an 'incarnate Democrat'—he will probably fail to carry many of even his own admirers with him: some of them will look on the illustrious Corsican as an Autocrat of Autocrats. But when in his lectures on 'Representative Men' he endows Napoleon with two sets of quite incompatible qualities, the student of nerve can only look on with 'special wonder.'

In the earlier pages of the lecture on Napoleon the hero is placed only a little lower than the angels; in the later pages he appears to be only a little above the devils. In one page he is a truly modern man and thoroughly represents the modern spirit; all his behaviour is marked by 'prudence and good sense'; 'such a man was wanted.' In another page he aims only at power and wealth 'without any scruple as to means'; he is 'an intellect without a conscience'; he has neither common truth nor common honesty. Nay he is a 'boundless liar,' 'an impostor,' and a 'rogue.' He is all these things, be it noted, not in succession, but at one and the same time.

It is conceivable, though it rarely if ever happens in real life, and then only under the pressure of abnormal or violent circumstances,

that nerve, especially moral nerve, may undergo violent changes. It is conceivable too that nerve may be characterised by good behaviour to-day and gross misconduct to-morrow, but no sort of nerve can possess these different attributes at one and the same time. Such union can only be found in a purely literary imagination.

Carlyle, it is needless to say, classed Napoleon among his 'heroes.' Hero is an elastic term. But can Napoleon, from any point of view, be called a representative man? Does he represent a time—modern time—which above all other times desires to know what is true, to do what is right and to foster the finer feelings. The student of nerve has good reason to know that Napoleon was the victim of abnormal nerve organisation, the result in all probability of nerve ailment in infantile life. That ailment left intellectual nerve in enormous excess and normal nerve in very dwarfed proportion. So far, in truth, was Napoleon from being a representative man, he was perhaps the most solitary figure in all history. He suggests not so much the modern man as the reappearance of some huge fossil mammal crossing the stage of modern history and startling rather than representing modern men. Cromwell, when near middle age, came out of

private life to advocate with might and main what he believed to be the religious and political good of his country. Cæsar was bound to his countrymen by many ties. Napoleon had no single ideal, no desire, no aversion, no reverence, which did not relate to his own personality.

Chapter X.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

Turning now to more recent examples of the judgments pronounced by authorities of great note, but of purely literary training, we may with profit pay some attention to the writings of Mr. Goldwin Smith. Goldwin Smith's life has extended into the more scientific and saner era and he has not failed to recognise the fact; he displays not a little of the scientific spirit. For example, (see "The United Kingdom, a Political History") he actually believes that brain-weight goes for something; he considers that the forehead of George III. was 'ominously low'—words which would have had no meaning for Mill and Buckle and all the purely literary multitude. Had the king's brain weighed some ounces more than it did the course of history might not indeed have been greatly changed, but the troubles with American colonists and with Irish Catholics would probably have weighed less heavily on certain peoples. But Goldwin Smith's later

scientific open-mindedness brings him into conflict with his earlier literary training. He delights, for some pages, to dwell on the iniquity of the Tudor manipulation of Parliament for Royal purposes; and then, a little later, he admits that 'in the main the Tudor monarchy met the temporary need, and commanded, the allegiance of the nation.' The literary spirit whispers to him 'the Tudor monarchs were unscrupulous despots'; the scientific spirit replies that the Tudor rulers were fitted for the time and the people, and, it may be added, the people knew it and were thankful.

Goldwin Smith remarks that Charles II., although unprincipled, yet being 'a man of sense' (James II. he counts "an obstinate fool"), might have accomplished what James failed to do. Had Charles, he says, been, with his capabilities, 'a respectable bigot and absolute also,' he 'might have extinguished the liberties of England.' Here the historian yields to the literary impulse; but in another page he turns round, under the influence of science, and affirms, very justly though somewhat inconsistently, 'that the love of liberty innate in the race would have gained the day.' Again he forgets his physiology when he asserts that the political nonconformity which succeeded to the decay of Puritanism saved

England from being a political Spain, minus the Inquisition; but in his shrewd comments on the Lord George Gordon riots he is scientific once more and observes, with a keen sense of racial differences, that '*British Savagery having limits*' (the italics are mine), "nobody was hanged on a lamp-iron, nor were any heads carried on pikes."

To turn aside for a moment, Goldwin Smith (though not here expressing his own opinion) records the circumstance that, during the Puritan Revolt of the 17th century, the Commons not only voted the Monarchy and the House of Lords out of existence, but passed a resolution to the effect that the people "are the original of all just power." The political spirit, it may be remarked, has at root much in common with the literary spirit, seeing that, hitherto, the only training of politicians has been of a literary character; and the political spirit, unfettered by physiological considerations, has, as a rule, delighted in putting forward abstract declarations. The French Revolutionists revelled in high-flying verbal manifestoes. They are the stock in trade of demagogues, communists and anarchists. It would be difficult indeed to point to any field of intellectual action where literary verdicts are so erroneous and so mischievous. The bases of political power in every community and in every

nationality are precisely what the stream of evolutionary forces have left behind them: those bases, however confused and however apparently unreasonable, have been the fittest for the time and place. At the mouth of the Elbe it was evolution that left 'the original of power' in the hands of the people. At one time in Ireland it left it in a crowd of Kinglets and chieftains. The literary political thinker may of course complain that for the most part the leavings of evolution are not good. They are, however, the 'fittest,' but the fittest, it may be urged, is not necessarily good. We certainly may discuss them and strive to alter them—for discussion and effort are also minor evolutional products.

The importance of recognising the effect of physiological forces in social states and changes has yet to be recognised. Strange as the statement may seem, it is strictly true, that if to-day, by some miraculous intervention, all our brains were made exactly similar we should all be Socialists—possibly communists—to-morrow. So long as brains differ, so long will the lives and lots of men differ.

Chapter XI.

MATERIAL PROSPERITY AND RELIGION.

The relation of religion to material success is a matter of unusual interest, and naturally is frequently discussed. The verdicts delivered in the discussion are usually of a literary or theologico-literary character. It is generally admitted that Catholic peoples are less prosperous than Protestant peoples. The contrast between the two peoples and religions is, of course, most conspicuous when Catholic and Protestant nationalities are brought into close proximity, as in Switzerland, in the Netherlands, and in Ireland. The verdict of the Catholics themselves is one of deep significance, and is well expressed by their highest authority, Cardinal Newman. Protestant peoples, he contends, have a larger share of this world's well-being because they give their hearts to this world; Catholic peoples are poverty-stricken because they give themselves up to religion and the next world. Newman and those who share his views are not physiologists—have

not the scientific attitude—and therefore do not go on to consider whether the sum-total of nerve force in the average Catholic is equal to the sum-total of the average Protestant: yet this must be considered if we would go to the root of the matter. Neither do they adequately, if at all, press the question: Why does the Protestant devote himself more to this world, and why the Catholic to the next? The true answers to these questions are, I cannot but think, based on the nerve characteristics of different nationalities. Broadly speaking, Catholics have one sort of nerve and Protestants have another. As a rule Catholic nerve is found chiefly in Southern and in Celtic peoples and Protestant nerve in Teutonic. It is also beyond doubt true that Teutonic nerve is more independent, self-reliant and resolute, even if it is slower than the fervid and quick Celtic nerve. The historian Motley, in the course of his inquiries, was struck with the fact that the clear if somewhat zig-zag line which divided Catholics from Protestants in the Netherlands was precisely the line which divided Celts from Teutons. The lapse of time, he also contended, has in no way blurred the distinctness of the dividing line—it has rather intensified it. These considerations lead to the conclusion not that Protestantism in itself is naturally associated with

success, or that Catholicism is essentially linked with failure — but rather that Teutonic nerve leads to both Protestantism and prosperity, while Celtic and Southern nerve leads to Catholicism and poverty. The Catholics scattered among Teutonic peoples and running in Teutonic grooves, whether of Teutonic or Celtic lineage, are probably not less materially successful than their Protestant neighbours.

So far from decadence being the produce of Catholicism it would be truer to say that Catholicism is the result of decadence ; or, more correctly still, to say, that the peoples who took to Catholicism were the possessors of a sort of nerve which, from the beginning, was foredoomed to decadence. I utter no opinion here on the intrinsic worth of 'prosperity' on the one hand, or of 'decadence' on the other hand. The Catholic, it is easily conceivable, may urge that prosperity is a hideous phenomenon and betokens some descent towards the bottomless pit; while decadence is, in truth, a sign that the march to the Realms of Bliss is already well advanced. It surely cannot be that the materialistically unsuccessful feel more deeply and sadly the poet-philosopher's utterance—

> "The Bird of Time has but a little way
> To flutter—and the Bird is on the wing."

It is a belief widely entertained, and a verdict often given by men of letters, that Protestantism, in the form of Puritanism, gave us not only religious but political liberty also. Puritanism did neither. Liberty, whether religious or political, is a marked property of English nerve and had revealed itself in many ways, in Magna Charta and in free parliaments, before Puritanism arose.

It is frequently affirmed, as already stated, by literary and theological writers, that Protestantism is the mainspring of European progress. It may be true that civilisation is most advanced in Protestant countries, but it is so because one sort of nerve has certain peculiarities. That Protestantism, in itself, does not lead to progress is conclusively shown by the fact that, while civilisation and morality are ever quickening their steps, Protestantism is slowly but unquestionably decaying—is, in fact, believing fewer supernatural things, and believing those with a feebler belief. From the evolutionist's point of view Protestantism is merely an evanescent phase in a still advancing civilisation. It is not a little significant to note that while Protestant thought and feeling, in Protestant countries, are diminishing in strength, Catholic thought and feeling in Catholic countries seem to be growing in intensity.

Successful nationalities are growing less religious and the unsuccessful—from this world's point of view be it remembered—are growing more religious.

Chapter XII.

NERVE FORCES AS TOTALITIES.

Nerve force, as understood here, is the product of healthy and suitably nourished nerve matter. There is doubtless a sum-total of such force in the individual, a sum-total also in each human community. If, either in the individual, or in the community, or in the nation, this force is fully expended in one direction it cannot be expended in another as well.

In these pages, as a rule, only nerve which has to do with intelligent life is considered, but in estimating the totality of nerve force in a given individual it is necessary to keep in mind every sort of nerve in that individual. As the supply of blood to nerve is also a fixed amount, it may be that a man's muscular exertion for example will lessen the vigour of his intellectual exertion. Not only are intense thought and deep feeling incompatible at the same moment, but further, he who runs or rows or fights with intense vigour is, for the time, incapable of effective thought, or feeling, or even of sensation. He, for the time,

neither reasons, nor loves, nor hates. The old Greek athletes began their races with loud shouts: they at any rate knew nothing of nerve-totalities. A dim perception of the physiological truth that one sort of nerve force may be made to take the place of another, leads the novelist to put a newly rejected lover on the back of a spirited horse, or at any rate to compel him to take a vigorous and prolonged walk. The distressed heroine too relieves, or changes, nerve tension by flying to her bedroom, plunging her face in pillows, and shedding tears.

Not only is there in a given nerve-mass a limited sum of nerve force but, seeing that mature brain—especially capable brain—is usually a particular sort of brain, so the outcome of that brain is of a particular sort also. Two sorts of nerve—with strong yet divergent biases—are rarely met with in the same skull. Moreover, a particular sort of fully developed brain is not readily changed. Goethe's mighty brain-mass played ingeniously with science. But the developed brain of a great dramatic or poetic genius if already developed in one direction—even a Goethe's—could not have written 'The Principia.' A mature brain of the strenuous scientific bent and occupation could not have written 'Faust.' Darwin's brain, with its inherited character, its

training and antecedents, could not, per contra, have written 'The Pickwick Papers.' The forces within and outside the skull which were busy in Dickens's brain could not have given us 'The Origin of Species.' Doubtless there may be much variety of faculty and propensity in any capable and evenly balanced brain, but it will not run in very diverse directions.

The dramatic and poetic brain of Shakespeare, with all its inheritance, antecedents, and concomitants could not have written the 'Novum Organum.' Neither could the legal, literary and political training and occupation of Francis Bacon's brain have fitted it to produce either 'Romeo and Juliet' or 'King Lear.'

The question of the totality of nerve-force may be traced out in many ways. Take, for example, the question of the relative force of the brains of well-known writers. Any chapter of George Eliot's 'Middlemarch' would furnish intellectual material for a whole novel of the average type. There is passion enough in 'The Scarlet Letter' to float a dozen ordinary love stories.

University life furnishes an interesting example of the limitations of nerve-force. A single powerful dominant force in a university—more frequently seen in the past than now—dwarfs all other forces. Mark Pattison drew attention to

the fact that, during the Tractarian movement, classical learning in Oxford sank to a distinctly lower level.

The Puritanism of the 17th century throws a vivid light on the physiology of nerve. By means of the concentration of the nerve force of a somewhat inconsiderable number of capable and earnest men the Puritans stole a march on the easy-going English people. The march was duly resented and checked, but not before the fighting spirit was fully aroused. That spirit led to two striking results; in the first, English Churchmen were not permitted to enter a theatre; in the second Puritan preachers were not permitted to come within five miles of a conventicle. In the long run, harsh as its measures were, the larger totality of Church-nerve gained the upper hand and keeps the upper hand still, probably—if we must have one of the two sorts of nerve—for the benefit of civilisation in all ways, moral, scientific, literary, and artistic.

As it is with individuals and communities, so it is with peoples, and so also it is with epochs and centuries. The Reformation, as is well shown by the Hibbert lecturer, Dr. Beard, was mainly an intellectual movement—intellectual and controversial. But as the total sum of reform-nerve could not keep both intellect and morality at high

pressure, morality sank, as Luther reluctantly admitted, to a lower than its average level.

The distribution of the given sum-total of nerve force is seen, as it has been already remarked, in the life of centuries and epochs. In the earlier half of the sixteenth century the total force of educated and capable nerve in this country was almost wholly used up in religious thought and feeling; in the latter half it was devoted almost wholly to poetry and the drama—with what results we know.

As civilisation advances the total sum of nerve force tends more and more to divide itself and to run into various grooves. We can never again be so religious as were the subjects of Henry VIII., who were religious and nothing else; or so poetic as the subjects of Queen Elizabeth, who gave their whole attention to poetry and the drama.

To show how and why the expenditure of nerve-totals slowly changes from time to time, how the trends of life merge one into another, should be the duty of philosophic historians. So far however this duty has been imperfectly performed; and so it will continue to be until historians recognise the part which human organisation plays in human problems.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE DIRECT MAN (DIRECT BRAIN).

IS OUR TIME GROWING MORE COMPLEX?

THE EVOLUTION OF THE DIRECT MAN (DIRECT BRAIN).

THE words 'direct brain' are used in preference to 'direct mind,' for direct mind is merely the action of one sort of brain, just as tortuous mind is the outcome of another sort. The word *plain* is not used here seeing that it is often applied to the man of average brain. Average brain is not direct: it is brain of more or less indirect methods, hazy ideas, and timid conclusions. It may be said of direct brain that, whether it does or does not see a greater number of life's truths, it sees those truths more clearly and, above all, it more keenly appreciates their relative magnitude. It forms its views, and shapes its conduct, in the light of first-rate truths, and consigns to their proper place the second and third-rate truths which do so much to distort the views and enfeeble the action of indirect brain. Direct brain is critical, testing, inquiring brain: in seeking truths it divides the phenomena of life into those which properly belong to the domain of

reason and those which appertain to the emotions. Indirect brain imagines that by passionate conviction and, perhaps, by copious tears, two and two may be made to amount to five.

It is contended in these pages that direct brain is a potent factor in human progress, and that, in evolving peoples, direct brain becomes more direct, and men of direct brain more numerous.

Both tortuous and direct brain may have deep emotions, but the direct brain has perhaps the deeper, and these deeper emotions help to intensify directness; both may have poetic feeling; both may have lofty ethical ideas.

The more direct and increasingly dominant brain is, in the main, and in our people, a modern product: but in saying this we are faced by a seeming paradox. Our time is said to be one of growing complexity; old leisure is dead; life is becoming more and more feverish and its pace more and more killing. In appraising this charge against our time and life, it must be borne in mind that difference in temperament, or nervous organisation, in those who bring the charge, counts for much. To bustling nerve every age is bustling; to calm nerve every age is calm. In reply to the charge referred to it may be well, by the way, to remark that now, more than in any past time, health is better, life is longer,

and bodily stature is greater—surely curious concomitants of fever and hurry.

To return: Is it credible that men of increasing directness could produce, or be produced by, an increasingly tortuous mental atmosphere? Doubtless the sciences are growing in scope and in detail; and the arts based on them, electric, telegraphic, telephonic, and others, are increasing in number and utility. But what if these changes bring light and order—nay, even greater repose—in place of disorder and obscurity and unrest? A large forest, with light, and roads, and finger-posts, is simpler than a more circumscribed but dark and pathless jungle. It is easier to find one's way through the city of Paris than to thread the Maze at Versailles.

Although it is true that human nature and human affairs are undoubtedly complex—is not the complexity being slowly unravelled? No doubt there was once a time when human beings were, in a sense, simple. The history of mankind would seem indeed to reveal two simplicities—one very remote, and one quite modern. Broadly speaking one was the simplicity of a lower nerve-organisation with fewer wants and slighter capabilities; the other is one of higher nerve-structure and therefore higher needs and higher

capabilities—but these higher needs and capabilities are coupled with orderly and illuminating knowledge. Between the simplicity of the savage and that of the scientist there intervened a long-enduring period of complexity. What causes brought about that period? What were its characteristics? When did it begin? When culminate? When dwindle?

The complex epoch of our civilisation began, doubtless, when the evolution of nerve had so far advanced that reflection and reasoning became active factors in life, and while, united with this development, men were still in complete ignorance of nature—nature both human and external. The complex epoch reached its greatest intensity when intellectual vigour attained a very high level, and yet at the same time ignorance continued undiminished. When exactly it began it is difficult to say. The beginnings and endings of deep and enduring human currents are almost imperceptible; their progress and culmination and decay are for the most part inconceivably slow. In our own country this epoch reached its culmination in, or near, the middle ages: its dwindling is with us still.

If we look merely at the visible things and happenings of life, this complex epoch had more of tangle and hurry than the modern epoch; the

worries of labour were greater and the hours longer; the hours of repose and recreation were fewer. Travel was characterised by prolonged weariness and ceaseless bustle. Let us glance at two representative men—say university students—of whatever calling. The mediæval student after long and bustling preparations, the stars having been consulted, a crystal having been peered into, a priest having shrived him, began a journey full of incident and accident. At every turn of the high-way there were pilgrims, friar-preachers, mystery-players, soothsayers, jugglers, musicians, pedlars. Clearly leisure was not then born. The modern and more direct traveller is gentler, quieter, and more reposeful. His preparations are simple and silent; his journey uneventful and brief in time; his leisure at his destination is possibly undisturbed and prolonged. In all ways indeed, in dress, in habits, in manners, in aims and goals, in work and play, the modern man is simpler and more direct. The future gives ample promise of a still simpler life, a life too—though much will depend on individual nerve-organisation—of slighter labour, longer repose, and quieter meditation.

But to the natural complexities of life were added the still greater complexities involved in supernatural beliefs. By far the greatest

complicators of life are ignorance and fear. These dominate all early civilisations. The fear springing from ignorance is mainly fear of the supernatural and invisible powers which were once supposed to lurk in every quarter; it was a fear which never slept. Following closely on the heels of supernatural terrors came supernatural contrivances for escape therefrom—magics, witchcrafts, religions, theologies. These, and the complex children born of these, gave the maximum complexity to a complex era. For a long time all these elements—ignorances, terrors, supernaturalisms, the black arts, and theologies existed together; they were intimately related; they propped each other up and kept each other in countenance.

In looking more closely at the complex era in our history some landmarks come into view. On the remoter side of its culminating point were the tortuous subtleties of a Scotus, an Aquinas, an Erigena; on the nearer side we find the comparatively simpler views of a More, an Erasmus, and a Colet.

The distance from early men to the schoolmen was immense in time but slight in achievement. The flint-chipper of the early Thames drift and the logic-chopper of mediæval Oxford had more in common than the latter had with the

truth-seekers who now fill our museums, laboratories, observatories, and other fields of labour. A very remarkable circumstance to observe is that early men and schoolmen alike were submerged in supernaturalisms. To both, the visible world and its known evils were less real than the invisible world and its imagined calamities. Neither primæval men nor mediæval men had any conception of inevitable and persistent law. They would not have been surprised if some day the sun had risen at noon, or had forgotten to rise at all. They would not have greatly marvelled if Mont Blanc had leapt up and danced a horn-pipe and the sun and moon had stepped down to see the fun.

A few signs of the coming directness appeared early: we trace them in Roger Bacon and, in a different way, in John Wyclif. Late examples of complexity are even more remarkable: that giant in intellectual tortuosity, Newman, believed that all the operations of nature are carried on by angels; he even saw, by the way, angels in the seemingly empty seats of thinly attended churches.

In the broad stream made up of the more enduring elements of a people's evolution, there are minor and less enduring elements which come and go—evolving and dissolving but more

rapidly: a supposed witch-craft was one of these; feudalism was one; slavery was another. To one who objects that complexity in human life is a feature of evolution, and must grow as evolution advances, it may be replied that there were those who declared that to give up slavery was to return to a ruder civilisation. John Wesley said, in effect, that to relinquish witch-craft was to go back to primitive atheism. We may say, then, that just as an era of servitude came between two eras of freedom; and an interval of supernaturalism between two periods of naturalism; so there intervened a complex epoch between two simpler epochs.

A time of more direct nerve possesses a clearer vision of what is most needful for the common weal—intellectual, moral, and emotional. It would seem natural to suppose, looking at our own history, that the first act of the first legislative body would be directed to the protection of helpless children from cruelty. Strangely and sadly enough, of all notable enactments it has been the latest—coming indeed in a 'sadly materialistic' time and people. When the general nerve-organisation has reached a still higher level of clear vision and direct action it may perhaps be seen that another simple enactment has been curiously neglected—one to secure the equality

of the sexes—political, social, and otherwise. The division of human beings into men and women is not intellectually or morally the most fundamental division. There are capable men and women and there are incapable men and women; there are wise men and women and foolish men and women; there are good men and women and bad men and women; there are strong men and women and there are weak men and women: yet political power is given to incapable, and foolish, and bad, and weak men, simply because they are men, while it is withheld from capable, and wise, and good, and strong women, simply because they are women.

[For Index see Full Table of Contents.]

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